The Dissertation Committee for Jenefred Hederhorst Davies

certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Emerging Pride of Place:
Mexican American Teacher Candidates' Perceptions and Experiences Within a Historically Black University in Texas

Committee:

Lisa Cary, Co-Supervisor

Stuart Reifel, Co-Supervisor

Lisa Goldstein

Norvell Northcutt

Sofia Villenas

Emerging Pride of Place:
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by

Jenefred Hederhorst Davies, B.S.; M.A.

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DEDICATION

To my family, my students, and colleagues

who fully supported my dreams and efforts the entire way!

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Thank you to those who in small and big ways have been a source of encouragement to complete this project. Although this research study specifically focused on the Hispanic teacher candidates, I cannot overlook the significance of my former students in the public schools and in the teacher education program at the institution of this study, to which I have given the pseudonym Sojourner Truth University. One does not survive a dissertation journey without the moral support and the assistance of special people. My husband Roland was unwavering in his belief that this story needed to be told. My children, Cory, Jarrett, and Sheridan, kept me laughing as did my son-in-law Jon Cody and daughter-in-law Maura.

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I am proud to share amazing stories lived by the 7 teacher candidates in this study. It has always been a profoundly worthy journey with no turning back!

Emerging Pride of Place:

Mexican American Teacher Candidates' Perceptions and Experiences

Within a Historically Black University in Texas

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Jenefred Hederhorst Davies, Ph.D.
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Co-supervisors: Lisa Cary and Stuart Reifel

Framed within a context of social justice, this ethnographic study queried seven Mexican American students who pursued teacher certification at a historically Black university (HBCU) in Central Texas. By examining the Mexican American students' perceptions, this study opens conversations to challenge the limited information known about Latino/as attending HBCUs and the programs that prepare preservice teachers of Color.

Mexican American students and the HBCU both exist at a crossroads, an intersection of border spaces of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and ability. While border crossers defines the uniqueness of these Mexican American teacher candidates who live in contradictory realities, *borderlands* defines the HBCU as a site of resistance in the margins of higher education. A Black–White binary, therefore, not only is flawed but also

obscures struggles common among Latinos, African Americans, and Others for an equitable education.

Through interviews and small group sessions, the teacher candidates shared a high regard for educational achievement, work ethics, and teaching. From the coded data, their stories were analyzed through the lens of critical race theory, borderlands consciousness, and critical pedagogy. Although commonalities exist, each analytical perspective brought to the forefront variant aspects of race, class, gender, and abilities. Linked to these analytical frameworks was the notion of three selves: enduring, situated, and endangered, which helped to illuminate the nature of change and transformation. In tandem with the analyses were member and colleagues checks that helped to provide deeper interrogation and clarity.

Findings reveal how race and class shape the teacher candidates' identities as well as the character of the university. Although the Mexican American preservice teachers bring rich cultural legacies and cross-cultural perspectives, their needs and interests are under-addressed by the institution. Yet for them, it was class disparities more than racial injustices that perpetuated problems inside and outside the HBCU. Nonetheless, these teacher candidates believe the validating experiences and cultural network, which they acquired at this HBCU, will support their teaching effectiveness in public schools. The strengths and findings of this study are therefore crucial to rethinking policies and practices as related to teacher education programs and HBCUs, and their impact on communities of Color.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, low, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy.

G. Anzaldua

Introduction

Our session began uneventfully. Waiting for the others, we had found a table outside the coffee shop. We were there to talk research. Suddenly Louis reared back, startled, and shook his head, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry." His apology referenced the break in our conversation, but his words represented much more. His quick perception had seen something that my own vision had not sensed. Across the terrain crouched below the bushes, two men were hiding. "See those men over there. It's just so—hard, 'cause I know how they feel. They're just trying to work, to get money for their families.'" Louis attempted to refocus, but his consciousness was imprisoned by life experiences and deeper realities. He sensed the closeness yet distance from those "illegal" men's lives.

Louis's story embodies the core of this research study. The New Mestiza/o, Latino/a, Mexican American, Chicana/o, Hispanic, Tejano/a constantly migrates between knowing one's self and realizing "she has many names…and the fear of not owning who she is" (Hull, 1999, p. 7). The border crossers' realities are a metaphor of discomfort and comfort in knowing one's past, situated present, and possibilities for the future. While a university education offers a student a bridge to awareness and other realities, such transformations occur in this in-between state of transition, crossing borders and changing perspectives (Anzaldua, 2001). Knowledge makes one more aware. "But

'knowing' is painful, because after 'it' happens one cannot stay in the same place" (Anzaldua, 1999, p. 70). For as bell hooks (1990) observed, place gives life and takes it away.

In this research study the stories of border crossers, 7 Mexican American teacher candidates reveal people and places that silenced, desecrated, or dignified identities (hooks, 1990) at Sojourner Truth University, a historically Black college. At the postsecondary level, although Latina/os have gained representation, they constitute only 4% of all college undergraduates earning bachelor's degrees. Latino/as continue to be underrepresented in colleges and universities as compared to the total U.S. population of 29 million (11%) and in Texas (30%) (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Gutierrez, 2004). Soon to be the numerical majority by 2030 in the United States, Latino/a students deserve to be visible and benefit from additive college experiences, and they deserve to create their own educational opportunities (Reyes & Halcon, 2001; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Valencia, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999).

Although since the Civil Rights era, "higher education has tried to diversify and to figure why it has such difficulty doing so," today's economic, political, and demographic realities mean it is time for colleges and universities to be accountable for understanding Latino/a students within the complexity of the "educational pipeline" (Ibarra, 2003, p. 217). Most apparent in 2003 data released by the Texas Education Agency are the recognized concentrations of minority students in Dallas (93.3%), Houston (90.7%), and Austin (68.8%), of which 30% of the ninth graders in these districts fail to finish high school with a diploma, ranking Texas 35th in the nation for high school graduation rates (Embry, 2006). As significant is the fact that students in highly segregated urban schools

are many times more likely to be in schools of concentrated poverty. Concentrated poverty is powerfully related to both school opportunities and achievement levels (Morrison, 1997). A school district is considered "high poverty" if more than 38.7% of the students qualified for federal school meal programs. In 2003, the poverty rate was measured in Houston (80.3%), Dallas (77.6%), Austin (53.0%), in Texas statewide (46%), and in the United States nationwide (38.7%) (Embry, 2006). Students attending high-minority, low-income schools are exposed to less experienced teachers, higher teacher turnover, and lower career options than students in more desegregated settings (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Morrison, 1997).

This reality is daunting, but there is a positive side. Orfield and Lee (2005) have found that students of all races who are exposed to integrated educational settings are later, more likely to live and work among people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Such students exhibit a better understanding of people of different backgrounds and life options and have a greater receptivity to living and working in diverse settings. Education, therefore, remains the primary means of upward mobility, especially for those students from underserved and economically disadvantaged populations.

Forging Pride of Place

Although they are the emerging majority population, too often Latinos, Hispanics, and Mexican Americans have seen their identities and cultural knowledge dismissed or disregarded in the development of their own literacy and the literacy of Others. We must understand that "identity is not simply a personal issue, but that it is deeply embedded in institutional life" (Nieto, 2002, p. 12). In the past, the function of schools has been to

negate differences or to deal with diversity by ignoring it or forging uniformity through assimilation (Moll & Gonzales, 2004). Institutions confront a multicultural paradox. On one hand, school officials have recognized the significance of cultural diversity in schooling, but that same vision of diversity has instilled narrow and conservative practices. Moll and Gonzales noted, "It is insufficient to simply acknowledge diversity" (p.700). Instead, schools and teachers must address diversity through a process of engagement with the everyday conditions of life (Banks, 1994, 2001, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001, 2004).

Whether, and how, an institution validates, or fails to validate, the students' lives may impel students to forgo their cultural identities for academic success (King, 2004; Ogbu, 2003; Steele, 2004). Thus, it is critical to pursue new solutions from very different perspectives. Until recently, few studies have focused on the richness of the cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources of college students who designate themselves as Mexican Americans. Aside from this absence in the literature, few programs in higher education have tapped into the rich resources of Mexican American or Hispanic students to help them establish their *pride of place* within the expansive educational community. Pride of place emerges through a community-building discourse where alliances are forged to break down barriers and take on struggles for social change. Whether or not educators and institutions are effective with Latino or non-Latino students is above all a question of ideological and political clarity (Bartolome, 1996; Nieto, 2001). By reexamining what colleges and universities do, we can generate new ideas as well as new challenges for the changing faces of education.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities, a Tradition of Inclusion

Uniquely positioned to negotiate as well as rethink diversity and socioeconomic challenges, are the historical Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) that since their inception have been multiracial communities (S. Willie, 2003). Part of the Black college mystique shrouds the fact that the student populations and faculty-staff of HBCUs are not just African Americans, but rather are extensively diversified. Relentlessly, the mission of HBCUs has focused on opening doors that were closed to many students for a variety of reasons. Just as the presence of Blacks has not harmed the integrity of traditionally White institutions, the presence of Others at Black colleges has not harmed them, but instead has served as an enhancement phenomenon (C. Willie, Reddick, & Brown, 2006). All should take note of how "Black colleges and universities have produced a tradition of inclusion in higher education" (C. Willie et al., p. 31).

While in 2006, the 103 HBCUs represent just 3% of the nation's 4,084 institutions of higher learning, 24% of all African American students earn their undergraduate degrees from 4-year HBCUs. The irony is that although fewer and fewer percentages of African American students attend HBCUs, these institutions continue to have an impact on the attainment of higher education, especially for students interested in becoming teachers. Remarkably, more than 50% of the African American teachers in U.S. public schools have graduated from HBCUs (C. Willie et al., 2006). Unfortunately, even though HBCU teacher education programs have received numerous accolades (Banks & Banks, 2004; Gay, 2004; King, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2005), no statistics are published or accessible concerning the number of non-Black teachers who

have graduated from HBCUs. In effect, these non-Black HBCU teacher graduates remain invisible to the academy.

Training Educators to Effectively Teach Multicultural Populations

To better meet the challenges of the 21st century in U.S. schools, one key imperative is to provide high-quality teachers for all students, especially those historically underserved by the educational system, including low-income students, non-English language learners, students in rural and urban settings, students with special needs, and students of Color (Banks & Banks, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999). Demographic changes in student populations indicate that teachers who have the skills to succeed in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms will be in ever-greater demand (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; King, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1998, 2001, 2003). Furthermore, teacher education programs that provide community-based internships, link research and theory to practice, model culturally relevant skills, and teach applications for multicultural classrooms are more likely to produce graduates with the knowledge and skills for teaching in the 21st century (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). Whatever the trends to better prepare teachers for multicultural classrooms, the diversity gap between students and teachers is large and widening. In other words, the proportion of teacher trainees of Color is much lower than the anticipated, increasingly diverse student population in our nation's schools (Moll & Gonzales, 2004; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005).

The issue of diversity in teacher preparation programs historically has been constructed from a deficit perspective regarding the education of minority students, particularly Mexican Americans (Ovando & McLaren, 2000; Pizarro, 2005; Reyes &

Halcon, 2001) and African Americans (Delpit, 1995; King, 1999, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2001). Moreover, in the face of intense emphasis on accountability standards and high-stakes testing for teacher licensure, notions of equity and social justice have been eroded (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). Heavy pressure to assimilate all students "into mainstream values and knowledge perspectives is being mistaken for preparing all young people to participate in a democracy" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004, p. 965). Ultimately, attempts to assimilate students and/or teacher trainees into a single model of value and behavior inherently do not value or respect diversity and individual differences (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003). The point of pedagogy should be an anti-assimilationist ideology, and without this, teacher candidates are not trained for effectiveness to attend later to the needs of the community (Elenes, 2003).

Sojourner Truth University (STU)

Located in a metropolitan Texas city, Sojourner Truth University (STU, a pseudonym) is a historically Black institution—a college with a proud legacy of training teachers, of which a high percentage have been teachers of Color. This HBCU nourishes a cultural space where African Americans, Mexican Americans, and people of multiple race heritages and of other nationalities come together as people defined in many ways, and race is only one marker of identity. As is true with all of the 39 United Negro College Fund (UNCF) schools, it was during the 1960s civil rights movement that STU served its highest enrollments of students in the school's history. Although *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, KS., et. al.* mirrors the college's ideology to serve students of diversity, one could say that the legacy of that court decision bankrupted the college and many other HBCUs (C. Willie et al., 2006). After the 1960s, as civil rights and

affirmative action legislation allowed larger numbers of Black college students to seek and gain admission to predominantly White institutions (PWIs), the student enrollments sharply declined at STU. If small HBCUs are to reverse dangerously declining enrollments and revenues by gaining a greater market share of all college-going students, then the HBCUs must reassess their place in an ever-changing global society. There are socioeconomic as well as educational reasons that HBCUs should enroll more non-Black students (C. Willie et al., 2006).

> As a social, political, and pedagogical site, the university is a terrain of contestation and one that can neither understand the nature of the struggle itself nor the nature of the liberal arts unless one raises the question of what the purpose of the university actually is—or might be. (Giroux, 1992, p. 90)

If we want increasingly diverse student populations to learn more effectively with more opportunities for success, then we must reveal how universities can function as social, political, and pedagogical sites (Giroux, 1992) and how the universities' teacher preparation programs can empower teachers actively to join in the struggles for social justice.

Limited Research Endeavors

There is a clear need for research that accounts for context in examining candidates' perceptions and experiences regarding teacher preparation at STU. Ladson-Billings (1998, 2001) and Cary (2001) argued that we need to know how teacher educators and programs understand issues of diversity and normative ideologies by critically examining efforts that do challenge the status quo. Yet, the call for self-reflexive examination is remarkably naïve about the scope of the task. Findings by Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) cited the absence of analysis of how economic conditions

mediate teacher-student learning in teacher preparation programs. Besides limited access to the minimal research on teacher preparation at HBCUS, according to Sleeter and Delgado-Bernal (2004), there is almost no research in the academy on the preparation of teachers that can be termed emancipatory.

My Positionality

As a teacher-educator for 27 years at STU, I have regarded highly my opportunities to teach and learn from the teacher candidates and colleagues in this unique educational setting. Still, I have felt impelled continually to understand the complexity of these students' lives, their relations to the university, and their fierce desires to become public school teachers. I have felt compelled to become more of a scholar-activist and less accepting of the status quo. I have come to understand that teaching is a political activity in which one needs to embrace social change as part of the work (Apple, 1979; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Lather, 1991; Nieto, 2001). As I began to seek resources to push this ideology, repeatedly I learned that even when standing in solidarity with people of Color, I run the risk of maintaining asymmetrical relations (Cary, 2003a; Cummins, 1996; King, 2005; Tate, 1999). Most prominent was the denouncement of any privilege of White researchers, because the power to name issues deeply affects those whose interests are to be served in the process (Elenes, 2003). White antiracist scholars still produce silences that do not resolve the problems of Whites' having the power (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). Consequently, with effort, I came to self-examine underlying ideologies in much the same way that I have urged teacher candidates to explore their beliefs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004). By proceeding with caution, my knowledge and efforts to understand and diminish the atrocities of Whiteness have been strengthened

through my exchanges with colleagues at STU, doctoral studies at The University of Texas at Austin, and participation at professional conferences.

As one among only a few White participants attending the Brown and Black Caucus at the 2003 American Educators Research Association (AERA) annual meeting, I sensed unity tempered by frustration. I felt encouraged sharing the interests of this community of scholars; however, the proposed complexity of issues and enormity of work ahead was daunting. The purpose for the Brown and Black Caucus was to conceptualize a connection—a sense of lived interrelated experiences, which addresses the social, cultural, and historical parallels—and to do so by resisting hegemonic domination while emphasizing analogous oppressions rather than equivalence.

A Research Opportunity

Brown and Black Caucus speakers called for scholars to "locate contexts for Browns and Blacks to dialogue," to "develop research that bridges the two cultures where neither is monolithic," and to "challenge the paradigms, thinking as researchers for change" (Pedrazo, 2003). While listening, I realized that the college where I teach was (and is) such a context—a location where Browns and Blacks dialogue and share interrelated experiences. To answer this call, I wanted to explore the perspectives of Latino teacher candidates who had proven themselves successful at STU. Additional justification for this study was my dismay at the absence of research and literature about teacher education programs at HBCUs. Such dearth of literature, in my opinion, perpetuated an attitude of deficit thinking about these culturally different university communities.

Study Rationale and Purpose

Just as at the Brown and Black Caucus at the AERA 2003 meeting, I hoped, in pursuing the proposed research at STU, that the study participants and I would join other academy leaders in finding connections rather than barriers: "We don't need to think about Latinos replacing African Americans but how alliances in the past were built. The future of politics in the U.S. will be centered around questions of how Latinos fit in" (F. R. Lee, 2003, p. A1).

At STU the presence of Mexican Americans is not a new phenomenon. For three decades, Mexican Americans have been a part of this campus community and, as at other colleges, the increase in their enrollment numbers reflects a growing trend. Aside from the predominance of African Americans, the Mexican Americans comprise the next largest percentage of students (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2003). At STU the student body of 700 is increasingly diverse in age, experience, socioeconomic status (SES), and ethnicity. Within the STU teacher education program, Mexican American students constitute 10%, which will rise, since Texas is now a majority-minority state. However, an increase in representation and presence of Chicana/o students does not necessarily mean more progressive approaches to ethnicity (Elenes, 2003; Valdivia, 2005).

Pivotal to the understanding of the study was the ultimate goal: By discussing perceptions and issues of knowledge and preparation at STU with the Mexican American preservice teachers, this process would provide impetus for scholarly actions. Through the dialectical process, the study participants and I would come to see and know different or new understandings. With the results of our inquiries, plausibly, the ideologies,

policies, and practices at STU would be informed, stopped, modified, or enhanced. Also, through inquiries and stories revealed, the Mexican American preservice teachers could enhance their own relations and teaching with diverse student populations. The intended effort was to capture in policy and practice a commitment to the value of being a multicultural institution. In turn, the Black college community could respond collectively in ways to acknowledge that the presence of Others enhances the integrity of the HBCU. Such responses could create greater cultural verve and economic vitality.

Building Cultural Bridges

A project of this complexity—transversing multicultural perspectives—could not be completed effectively on one's own; indeed, the insights and suggestions from many colleagues proved invaluable. In discussing this project with members of my doctoral committee at The University of Texas, Dr. Lisa Goldstein responded that it seemed the Mexican American students in this research study and at STU deserved a "pride of place." She had articulated what I sensed but needed to explore. From that conversation, *pride of place* became a critical dimension, and in fact *place* became a construct for greater discovery. I came to understand not only that the Others deserved a pride of place, but also that the institution, STU, was struggling to maintain its pride of place in the community and its significance of place in U.S. higher education.

Members of my doctoral committee further helped me to locate this project in the realm of critical race theory (CRT). Critical activists seek to make schooling responsive by transforming the relationships among race, class, gender, and power. A central element of CRT emphasizes that racial advances for people of Color are possible only where a convergence of divergent interests of Whites and people of Color exists (King,

2004). Proponents of CRT have argued that viewpoints of marginalized groups are rarely heard; encouraging narratives, or what criticalists term *counterstories*, provides both professional and personal benefits (Elenes, 2003; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 1999; Yosso, 2006). Narratives can provide a source of connection and strength for Latina/os or Others who may feel isolated. The sharing of narratives allows the narrator to transform identities and experiences and thereby leads to ethnopolitical understanding, political activism, and hope for the future (Delgado-Romero, Flores, Gloria, Arredondo, & Castellanos, 2003).

In helping to build cultural bridges at STU, the Mexican American teacher candidates are within and between once-sanctified homogenous communities (McKenna, 2003). While building and crossing bridges or borders, they are rendering their multiplicity of cultural experiences, invariably creating a third space in the process (Anzaldua, 1999; Anzaldua & Keating, 2002). Physically and socially, STU is a place where cultures are knocking up against each other. Where that give and take is occurring, creativity is taking place (Anzaldua & Keating). Such culture-centered knowledge and actions are critical for the teacher candidates to query and deliberate for the good of the students and for the livelihood of the institution.

Research Question

The research question asks what is most important for understanding and serves as the conceptual infrastructure for building the study (Stake, 2006). For this research project, the guiding question was the following: How do Mexican American and Hispanic teacher candidates describe their experiences, and what are their perceptions within one historically Black college located in Texas?

Keeping in mind the rich cultural landscape as well as the challenges embraced by HBCUs, this study is significant for both the present and future. It is vital, primarily because the populations of traditionally underrepresented persons in schools, colleges, and universities deserve to be effectively educated and promoted.

Using a process-building research approach could enable the guiding question and findings to lead to positive actions or corrective measures. Primarily, the study values voices that are not usually heard and provides a more complex dimension of understanding, rather than only a two-dimensional "Brown-Black" reading. Whereas most African American students enroll at HBCUs to reap the benefits of the Black college experience (e.g., identity affirmation and a wider circle of Black friends, a continued family tradition, Black church-related institution, and Black fraternities), it is intriguing to ask additional questions: Why and how do some of the Others of diverse heritages perceive and traverse the Black college experience? What life experiences are validated, censored, or abandoned in order to participate within the larger community? As more Mexican Americans are admitted, how does their presence challenge or alter the legacy of this historically Black college? What are the implications of this study for teacher preparation programs and teacher candidates, particularly those at HBCUs?

Terminology and Style

Policies regarding references to students of Color vary widely among the academy and within society. "Many of today's young do not see their community or their identity as that of a single ethnic group, place, or family; instead they pick and choose, change and reshape their affiliations of primary socialization" (Heath, 2004, p. 160). In this study, when speaking directly about the teacher candidates of Mexican or Hispanic

origin who attend STU, I followed the wishes of the participants by using ethnic designations that they prefer. Across the chapters of this study, I also interchanged the terms, like Latina/os and Chicana/os, generally following the reference by the scholar or the literature cited at that juncture. In doing so, I have taken a critical stance like Hidalgo (1999) and Gimenez (1989) against a standardized terminology for *Latino/Hispanic*. Gimenez argued against any umbrella term, because "standardized terminology is unavoidably flawed and conducive to the development of racist, or at best, trivial stereotypical analysis" (p. 1). Hidalgo rallied against social and research institutions such as schools that judge Latinos by their race, with little attention paid to their ethnic and national differences.

> Latino families' experiences have been constructed by traditional research and by the mind-sets operating in public schools as the monolithic "Hispanic" experience. This dominant, and supposedly neutral, monolithic view of Latinos has served as a racist means of oppression and colonialism against Latinos because it veils a deficit mentality. (Hidalgo, 1999, pp. 101-102)

Grounded in my experiences at STU, I will follow my students' lead by interchanging the terms *Black* and *African American*. From interactions with my students, I have learned that most self-identify as Black, some as African American, and the others either express no preference or vehemently resent all racial labels. A fact—not publicly documented by my university but a matter of casual debate among the students—is the prevalence of persons of mixed-race heritage. Although the STU students identify themselves as Black, Black-Hispanic, African American, Black-Puerto Rican, Spanish-Puerto Rican, African, hybrid, biracial, or "mixed," they struggle daily with the often negative ramifications of these labels. As Heath (2004) explained, "More and more individuals will be of 'mixed' cultures, ethnicities, and identities, and will learn to declare themselves of one or another ethnic group according to current rewards for such

declarations" (p. 160). While I cannot speak for Others, I can appreciate the wide array of terminologies that afford persons many choices in determining their own identities. Antiquated acts of sorting people by racial and ethnic labels for too long, and too often, have narrowed and scarred identities. Individuals should have the right to claim multiple identities (hooks, 2000), thus creating "a dynamic flowering of multiplicities" (McKenna, 2003, p. 431).

Among scholars and theoretical literature, policies also vary concerning the capitalization of references such as *people of Color*, *historically Black colleges and universities*, and *Black students*. For this study I chose to follow the policies for capitalizations established in *The Journal of Negro Education* (2004). Since emphasis via capitalization of the first letter in a category generally signifies the authors' political resistance or profound significance, I capitalize Color, White, and Whiteness to make salient these terms and consciously to explore the underlying effects of my Whiteness on this research.

Overview of Study and Distinctive Aspects

Data gathered and generated for this study, conducted during the spring and summer semesters of 2004, included two semistructured interviews with each participant and several small group sessions where 2–3 participants convened to share insights and forward understandings. These interactions were audiotaped, and then all transcriptions were member checked, promoting an exchange of further ideas. In my field notes, I recorded thoughts about these interactions as well as observations and informal conversations that occurred during and between classes at STU. As the project progressed, two STU colleagues helped me to deliberate questions and critiqued at least

one or more drafts. Through the review of literature, I embraced the expansiveness of constructs tapped in this study—from the status of Mexican American, first-generation college students, to the role of HBCUs, to assaults by Whiteness, and to adversities perpetuated by racism and socioeconomic class. By employing a case-studies approach (Coffey, 1999; Merriam, 2001; Mertens, 1998; Stake, 2006), in chapter 4 each study participant is introduced and the significance of their *situated and enduring selves* is presented (Spindler & Hammond, 2001). After all, "the situation is expected to shape the activity as well as the experiencing and the interpretation of the activity" (Stake, 2006, p. 2). In chapter 5, by using a CRT theoretical framework as well as constructs from critical pedagogy and borderlands consciousness, data analysis and findings are presented. To promote deeper understanding, conclusions, limitations, and implications of this study are delineated in the final chapter.

Two undercurrents (interconnected factors) shape the risks and benefits of this particular study: the power of place (the HBCU) and the positionality of the White researcher. Not to overshadow the importance of the teacher candidates' stories, while both unique aspects are acknowledged, place is specifically addressed in the appendixes:

1. The concept of place consumes both geographic and psychological terrains and questions how a place dignifies or desecrates identities.

2. My positionality within this study led me to embrace tensions that resulted from being both an "insider" (a professor with 27 years at a HBCU) and an "outsider" (a White, Eurocentrically trained teacher/researcher).

It is important to study context and "situational uniqueness," especially interactions with background conditions (Stake, 2006). Without the conceptualization of

place and its effects on learning, "our appreciation of the particular tends towards vagueness and depersonalization. Place embodies the social and the particular" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2000, p. 291). "Learning emerges from the social, cultural, and political spaces in which it takes place and through the interactions and relationships that occur between learners and teachers" (Nieto, 2002, p. 5). That is, learning is constituted through "agency, or mutual discovery by the students and teacher" (p. 5). Thus, knowledge formation is influenced by community and context—"the conditions of the institution and the effects of the institution" (Giroux, 1992, p. 29).

Recognizing that my positionality as researcher and professor would complicate the asymmetries of class, age, and race across a variety of theoretical and political traditions, I echo Roman's (1993) explanation that in her research with punk girls she could neither "go native" nor be a "fly on the wall." Concerning this insider/outsider dilemma (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Roman, 1993; Villenas, 1996), there is no safety in distance and no scientific ivory tower devoid of political lenses. As Delpit (1998) explained, "We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs." Hence, I choose to follow Ladson-Billings' (2001) lead, acting as the participant-observer who does not attempt to disentangle her roles of teacher/supervisor from that of researcher. My duties as the researcher are to remain ethical, to reflect analytically, and to reveal the teacher candidates' stories in compelling ways with rich description.

Consequently, the appendixes hold the expected and the unexpected. Appendix A contains the Human Research Subjects Form, to denote documentation of consent. Appendix B contains the interview questions used to facilitate conversations for

individual and group sessions. What is unique are Appendixes C and D, entitled respectively CRT Storytelling and the Power of Place. As a teaching tool, CRT Storytelling can provide the necessary context to overcome ethnocentrism and dysconscious convictions of viewing the world in one way (Choe, 1999; Elenes, 2003; Hermes, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Tate, 1999; Thornton, 1999; Villenas et al., 1999). The Power of Place (Appendix D) considers the phenomenon of a Black college as a unique educational setting for teacher trainees and the historical and contemporary role that the Black college has within the Black urban struggle.

Conclusion

The task of providing the most appropriate and effective educational programs and experiences for increasingly diverse student populations remains a major priority for educators in the United States. Yet, the very real teacher shortage in many parts of the nation, coupled with policies that discourage teachers from working in racially segregated minority schools, means that fewer well-qualified teachers are available to teach students of Color (Banks & Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; Delpit, 1995; King, 2001, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004; Nieto, 2002, 2004a, 2004b; Valenzuela, 1999). From academy leaders, two appeals were voiced with regards to recruiting and preparing teachers to meet the needs of diverse student populations. One request emphasizes the value of diversifying members of the teaching force, to give children of Color the opportunity to work with educators (a) who are like them in terms of cultural, ethnic, economic, or linguistic background and (b) who can enrich the instruction of all students because of the diverse knowledge perspectives and life experiences that they bring. The second request has to do with recruiting and preparing

teachers who are more likely to succeed in high-need areas, particularly in urban communities (Hollins & Guzman, 2005).

With little fanfare at STU, both requests are being fulfilled: The STU teacher education program prepares not only teachers of Color, but also most STU preservice teachers have chosen to teach in high-need urban schools. In particular, the Hispanic teacher candidates have selected STU because it offers them opportunities to find themselves within a different cultural community than their heritage. Since they are going to be teachers, they have anticipated that the STU campus ethos likely will be the type of community in which they will be teaching. Hence, the call from leaders at the AERA Black and Brown Caucus (Pedrazo, 2003) is also being fulfilled, because while at STU, the teacher candidates share Brown and Black connections.

There is no doubt that the complex problems of urban communities and the educational needs of students exert great influence on the type of teaching and learning environment, the curriculum, and the day-to-day operation of the institutions (Brantlinger, 2003; Ginwright, 2004; Moll & Gonzales, 2004; Valencia, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). In schools, colleges, and universities, the socioeconomic and cultural-linguistic backgrounds of the students have significant influence on the type and quality of education that students receive as well as their ultimate academic and career achievements (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Morrison, 1997).

Since inception, HBCUs have wrestled with issues of integrated schooling, inclusion, and quality education. It was in African American–centered settings that most Black children first learned how to cope with racism. “HBCUs were created as communities of resistance, where struggles can be sustained and members can move

forward" (Feagin & McKinney, 2003, p. 117). Given the sociocultural and historical dimensions and resulting challenges, within HBCUs an institutional hegemonic ideology, a status quo, has evolved that either ignores Others' diversity or expects assimilation (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Even so, HBCU graduates—despite attending predominantly Black undergraduate institutions—have proven their capabilities to function successfully in White graduate schools and the White workforce (Bennett, 2004; Gay, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2005; C. D. Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004; S. Willie, 2003). Testimonies from HBCU African American graduates have revealed that differences in gender, language, social class, or ethnicity need not be barriers to learning (Freeman, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2005; S. Willie, 2003). Regrettably, stories from non-Black HBCU graduates have remained silenced or anonymous. By rendering institutional racism invisible, we are led to the belief that injustices will disappear if people simply learn to get along. Central to pluralism is naming and actively challenging racism and other forms of injustice, not simply recognizing and celebrating differences with the hopes of reducing prejudice (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004).

Rather than remain institutionally ambivalent about the experiences of Mexican Americans within a Black college, this study materialized to create ways to change or to advance contemporary thinking in education. This critical inquiry sought to examine the perceptions of 7 preservice teachers who self-identified as Mexican Americans in their pursuit of higher education at a historically Black university in Texas. Rather than recreating or deepening the dominant paradigm, which imposes Brown/Black reductionism, this study placed Mexican Americans (and African Americans) at the center (Banks, 2004). The aim of the study was to investigate constraints, support

systems, and ways in which future Mexican American preservice teachers can be valued for themselves and their potential contributions to the college ethos.

Since no other research had tapped into the richness of perspectives and experiences of Mexican American teacher candidates at HBCUs, this study promised different risks and benefits. The relevance of this study is as a response to the calls to prepare qualified teachers and to stop the decline of many HBCUs.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The intent of this literature review is to inform the research question: How do Mexican American teacher candidates describe their experiences and what are their perceptions within one historically Black university? The review process identified and addressed voids and ambiguities and highlighted areas where this study could contribute to the literature. The investigation also included constructs of Whiteness to explore how Whiteness intrudes into the Mexican American teacher candidates' perceptions and experiences at a HBCU. Hollins and Guzman (2005) found that the majority of qualitative studies failed to contextualize how each teacher education program serves teacher candidates of Color. Also, studies did not fully align the investigation to a theoretical framework and to situate the question under the investigation to wider institutional and state contexts. To diminish such concerns, although not of equal weight, each construct presented in this literature review is assembled and woven together to build a substantial matrix for analyses.

Exploration begins with an examination of the significance of Hispanic students' emergence as a growing factor in higher education. Discussion turns to the importance of preparing quality teachers of Color to teach and guide students in U.S. public schools. Drawing from CRT, critical pedagogy, and borderlands consciousness, an analytical framework is built. The multiple discourses surrounding constructions of identities and representations of Mexican American preservice teachers are explored—though not simply in terms of language, histories, or skin color, but as interlocking systems. Prudent

consideration is given to the complex relations between schooling and students' class status. Literature about class, as it relates to schooling, is particularly important, because class is rarely discussed in teacher preparation programs (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Valdes, 1996). Class hierarchies support or constrain students' educational attainment. For example, pervasive poverty among STU preservice teachers—and financial constraints within the historically Black university—substantially impacts the preservice teachers' potentials for success. Obstacles that encumber steps to graduation may include costs of tuition and textbooks, unreliable transportation (needed for field practicum experiences), or inability to pay for teacher certification examinations. Thus, the investigation will illuminate how lower socioeconomic disparities intersect gender, education, race, economics, and place, intensifying problems confronted by working-class students. Other constructs important to this study and examined among the literature are Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs), HBCUs, teacher education programs at HBCUs, and institutional ideologies and practices that impede or encourage college students' progress. The examination of Whiteness and privilege provides directions for me to self-interrogate with the goal to stop or constrain any gatekeeping actions that reduce learning opportunities for preservice teachers at STU.

This study is neither symptomatic of a fascination with Otherness nor a redemptive endeavor. It stems from a desire to garner empirical and experiential evidence to impact the ethos at one historically Black university, to move from practices of assimilation and to increase the future viability of the institution. My desire is to reject my own cultural blindness and to see anew the tensions between agency and innovation (Frankenberg, 1993; Pinar et al., 2000). Foremost, this study examined the ways in which

ethnicities and institutional contexts may or may not influence the perceptions and shape the experiences of 7 Mexican American preservice teachers.

Mexican American/Hispanic Students in Higher Education

Latino/a-origin college students are expected to outnumber African American college students for the first time in 2006. By 2015, their numbers will approximate 2.5 million college students in the United States. This remarkable increase will find that Latino/as are 1 of every 6 undergraduates—thus, a social, political, and economic force to be reckoned with (Ibarra, 2003; Rendon, 2003). College students from lower SES families, particularly first-generation Latino/a students, prefer to attend community colleges or smaller universities that cost less and offer a more personal environment, and are close in proximity to their homes. Important to recruitment development at HBCUs are the data that show "the proportion of minorities at any institution is a function of the racial and ethnic makeup of the local community" (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005, p. 118).

Despite these social and demographic trends, American higher education has not adequately addressed this increasingly diverse student population. Long-standing issues loom unresolved for students of Color, such as academic access and retention, campus climate, underrepresentation on committees and in leadership activities, and faculty and staff diversity (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; MacDonald, 2004; Ybarra & Lopez, 2004). Much of the research on Latino college students has lumped them together into minority populations and overlooked substantive linguistic and cultural experiences (Bennett, 2004).

Hispanics, Mexican Americans, and Afromestizos

Mexican Americans have been grappling with new terms to mark their identity such as *Hispanic, Latino/a* and *Chicano/a*. These terms have been "imposed upon them by the federal government and their own quest for self-definition" (MacDonald, 2004, p. 282). "For example, students entering state colleges often have to tag themselves as 'non-Hispanic White' or 'non-Hispanic Black'" (Heath, 2004, p. 160). Within the confusion, it is important to acknowledge that Latinos are not one but rather many cultures, nationalities, and social statuses (F. R. Lee, 2003). Their experiences in the United States have been both complex and unique, since Latino/as have not followed the assimilationist patterns of European immigrants (MacDonald, 2004; Valencia, 2002).

Still, "the U. S. Bureau of the Census, national survey organizations, and local school districts present choices of ethnic identity as though they were clear-cut and permanently set along racial and group affiliations" (Heath, 2004, p. 160). Yet, many students and their families find these choices confusing or humiliating. For example, the offspring of a Jewish father from Israel and a mother from Mexico may find that she can "prove her Hispanic identity on school forms only by using her mother's maiden name as her own, rather than her legal name—that of her father" (Heath, 2004, p.160). Adding to the confusion, "the 2000 census for the first time allowed respondents to choose more than one race identifying themselves," as noted by F. R. Lee (2003).

> The U.S. Census Bureau never fails to confuse us in its attempts to clarify demographic information (with some five subcategories of Hispanic).…I do not know many census-identified Whites, Blacks or Hispanics who believe that they are truly White, Black or any other restrictive label….Racially and culturally we are not a "pure" stock. (Garcia, 2004, p. 492)

Mexican Americans are the largest Hispanic group in the United States, growing faster than Cubans or Puerto Ricans and increasing 5 times faster than the rest of the U.S.

population (Banks, 2003). “The rapid growth of Hispanics is due primarily to massive immigration and to a high birthrate” (Banks, 2003, p. 305). In the last decade, while the U.S. economy experienced rapid growth, the Mexican immigrant population continued to increase and to contribute significantly to American cultural, political, and economic activities. Recently, the group claiming both Mexican and American identity (i.e., identifying themselves with the dual identity of Mexican Americans) accounted for 30% of the population in Texas. Latino-origin U.S. populations are complexly stratified by class, color, gender, generation, and level of assimilation. Historically, Mexican Americans have “racially stood in an intermediate position between Blacks and Whites” (Gutierrez, 2004, p. 276). Perhaps because of this history, the issue of culture is particularly important to Mexican American students (Garcia, 2004; Nieto, 2002). “In this perspective, culture is not viewed as monolithic or unchanging, but as a shifting sphere of multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories, languages, experiences, and voices intermingle amid diverse relations of power and privilege” (Giroux, 1992, p. 32).

Participants and colleagues involved in this study preferred the ethnic identifier of *Mexican American* or *Hispanic* to *Latina/o* or *Chicana/o*. A reason given by most of the teacher candidates was that *Mexican American* positions them more closely with working-class families in Texas and their relatives in Mexico. Another teacher candidate, however, considers herself to be *Hispanic* but not *Mexican*. According to one participant, “*Latino* sounds uppity, and *Chicano* sounds rebellious.” This orientation illuminates Valdes’ (1996) explanation that, whether or not born in this country, Mexican Americans orient themselves toward their home country of Mexico and/or “measure their success

using Mexican nationals as their reference group" (p. 26). In my conversations with participants, they referred to themselves sometimes as *White* and other times as *Hispanic*. Olneck (2004) explained that persons learn to see themselves and adopt such signifiers as they become increasingly aware of the "ethnoracial markers in which they are persistently classified by the schools and other U.S. institutions" (p. 393). Trueba (1999) described the struggle Hispanics feel in establishing their identity in U.S. culture as follows:

> Wrestling with our ethnic identity is a daily event that takes many forms. If we carry the language and ideology from one setting (our home) to another (school or work) we are in trouble. We readily see ourselves as unable to function and communicate. If we keep these worlds separate, we feel marginalized in all of them, not really belonging to any. Worse still, we feel we are betraying one cultural world or another any time we switch codes, cultural audiences, communicative styles, or patterns of behavior. (p. 1)

Other writers have described specific institutions or circumstances that Hispanics may feel propel their separate identity. As Villenas (1996) noted, "To be Chicana in the myriad and infinite ways there are of being, to come as we are, poses a threat to integrated schools and to mainstream society" (p. 718).

Frankenberg (1993) found that each name, *Spanish, Mexican, Mexican American*, *Hispanic*, *Latino,* and *Chicano*, "evokes a particular moment in racial and colonial history, recalling the presence of the colonizer or the agency of the colonized in diverse ways" (p. 141). Increasingly, the trend in Chicano-inspired immigration studies has begun to look at intergenerational conflicts within and between ethnic groups (Gutierrez, 2004).

For this study, there is further distinction of immigrant and ancestral status (Ogbu, 2003; Valdes, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999): *First-generation Mexican American* refers to a person whose nuclear family immigrated from Mexico. *Second-* (to *fourth-*) *generation*

denotes a person born in the United States whose ancestors migrated from Mexico (Valenzuela, 1999). However, Valdes (1996) argued that such generalizations about Mexican migration populations in the United States are inconsistent and contradictory. Furthermore, Mexicans and Latinos are daily racialized as non-White. These labels result in occupation segregation, fewer educational opportunities, and lower wages (Gutierrez, 2004). As opposed to other recently arrived immigrant groups, this Mexican-origin population includes individuals who have resided in the United States for generations and see themselves as original settlers.

Although various Hispanic groups share the cultural impact of the Spanish language and Spain's colonization, vast historical, racial, and cultural differences persist. For example, many Mexican Americans are considered *mestizos*, whereas, many Cubans and Puerto Ricans are considered Blacks (Banks, 2003). In her book, *Recovering History Constructing Race*, Menchaca (2001) elucidated the racial foundations and status hierarchies of the Indian, White, and Black Mexican Americans' histories in the southwestern United States. Her work is significant because she included Blacks rather than denying their presence within the Mexican American populations. Menchaca's accounts differed from mainstream historians in that "unpleasant happenings and conflict take center stage when the focus is on race" (p. 11). Moreover, Menchaca illustrated how legislation, governance and social-status hierarchies continue to marginalize, regulate, and deny those who are racially different from access to land ownership and social prestige. Under the U.S. legal system, Mexicans are distinguished on the basis of race and are ascribed the legal rights accorded to their respective racial group. Mexicans who are identifiably *afromestizo* historically have been subject to the laws and social customs

applied to Blacks. Menchaca stressed, “Being Mexican and Black in the United States carried a double stigma” (p. 276).

Latino-Origin Students

Increasingly in academe, the word *Latino* is utilized to collectively denote the diversity of persons including Mexican Americans, Hispanics, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Latin Americans. Issues of identity and census classification continue to pose challenges for the education of this collective group. This difficulty in classification partially explains why the Latino trajectory into higher education is distant from both that of American Indians and African Americans, which historically were aided by missionaries and the federal government. The labeling of this collective group generally did not occur until the 1970s, when federal and state governments created a census classification for Hispanics. As a result of the entangled naming and categorization process, much early educational research was based on counts of Hispanic surnames; thus, the research undercounted Latinos who possessed Anglo surnames (MacDonald & Garcia, 2003). A similar problem occurred when for this study I asked the Registrar to identify the first enrollment of Mexican Americans/Hispanics at STU. She replied, “I have no way of knowing that information. We have never kept such records until lately [at this HBCU].” I remembered it had been 26 years since I began teaching my first classes of African Americans and Mexican Americans at STU, but I still appreciate the yearly phone calls and e-mail updates from a self-identified Mexican American male—now an assistant principal in a San Antonio high school—whose given name is John Brown.

Of any group in the United States today, Latino-origin students attend the most highly segregated elementary and secondary schools. Only 25% of Latino students attend majority-White high schools. Furthermore, Latino/as and other low-income racial/ethnic groups are more likely to attend high schools that have the fewest resources (Rendon, 2003). The degree of segregation in schools also largely determines the types of opportunities with resources such as technologies and networks useful for accessing desirable colleges and jobs (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). There are no quick solutions. Efforts to expand Latino/a-student access, participation, and success in higher education are likely to require a significantly increased number of high achievers from as early as the primary grades. The need is even greater for Latino males than Latina females (Garcia, 2004).

One significant trend impacting Latino enrollment in higher education is the issue of undocumented Latino/a college students. Even though numerous Latino/a students were reared in the United States and successfully attended many years of public schools, their parents have never been naturalized; the complicated legal status of these students results in their exclusion from eligibility to receive financial aid. Still pending, the DREAM Act of 2002 proposed that legal residency be granted "to undocumented students with no criminal records who have been U.S. residents for at least five years and graduated from an American high school or received a GED" (MacDonald, 2004, p. 285). Even so, recent public protests and marches for immigrant rights have caused numerous prospective Mexican American college students to refrain from identifying their unauthorized status.

Meaningful to the purpose of this study are data indicating that enrollment in a community college or 2-year college is a factor that appears to decrease the chances of college graduation, especially among Latinos. Latino/as constitute 57% of the 2-year college population, compared to 5% of undergraduate degrees conferred to Latino/as from 4-year institutions (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). This high attrition or dropout statistic signifies that Latina/o students often struggle to transfer to and negotiate a 4-year school. Thus, these data are meaningful in two ways: (a) STU needs to pursue ways to recruit and smooth the transition of Latino/as from 2-year programs to STU, and (b) educators need to look more closely to understand why the participants in this study have persisted through graduation. Factors such as language, culture, historical orientation to particular institutions, and degree of acceptance into the higher education community are believed to attribute to differing rates of persistence until graduation (Baker & Valdez, 1996, as cited in Bennett, 2004).

Garcia's (2004) synopsis contradicted or contributed a different perspective on the above data. Garcia found the overall Latina/o college graduation percentage, relative to other groups in the 25–29 age population, is actually somewhat larger than the data suggest (p. 497). According to Garcia, distortion results from the fact that more Whites, Asians, and Africans Americans complete high school compared to Latina/os, and therefore the college graduation percentage for Latinos draws from a smaller eligible population. In the words of Hernandez and Jacobs (2004), "The sensitizing nostrums of inclusion and multicultural appreciation are not salves for the abysmally low enrollments of Latino/as in American higher education" (p. 9). Minimal enrollment and, even more disturbing, high dropout rates of Mexican American college students are causes for

alarm. What role can the HBCU play in improving these statistics? Certainly, the proposed study holds promise in revealing perceptions and experiences of Mexican American teacher candidates, already juniors and seniors on the verge of graduation from STU.

Furthermore, although there is much talk about increasing numbers of ethnic/racial students in higher education, there is a deafening silence along class lines (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Lack of financial resources has been identified as one of the most common reasons for Latino/a student attrition in higher education (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003; MacDonald & Garcia, 2003; Nora, 2003; Rendon, 2003). Many first-generation students struggle to complete a college degree while college costs rise and their families have no reserves from which to draw. Latino undergraduates "tend to experience greater levels of stress associated with financial concerns than White students.…Financial obligations as well as the need to take on adult roles were the key variables in the decision to drop out" (Castellanos & Jones, 2003, p. 6). Nora identified the tangible and intangible components inherent in Hispanic college students' attitudes associated with receiving financial assistance. The tangible reward is such that college-related debts and expenses are decreased. An intangible reward is the type that involves stress reduction, but it also represents in the student's mind the institution's commitment and belief in the student's ability.

In formulating a theory of persistence, by focusing on access to higher education for Hispanic students, Nora collaborated with many scholars (e.g., Cabrera, Nora, & Castenda, 1993; Nora & Cabrera 1996; Nora & Garcia, 1999; Nora & Lang, 1999; Nora & Rendon, 1990, all as cited in Nora, 2003). Having interwoven this extensive research,

Nora explained multiple barriers operating against Hispanics' success in higher education. Nora's findings are similar to, and more expansive than, Gloria and Castellanos' (2003) examination of factors attributing to Latina/o and African American students' academic persistence at predominantly White institutions. This type of research on persistence targets the significance of social integration experiences, faculty mentoring relations, perceptions of academic performance, and family support or responsibilities. "For Latinos, their academic achievement and corresponding perceptions that cognitive gains had or had not been made while attending college were the most prominent factors in deciding to remain enrolled in college" (Nora, 2003, p. 61). To reiterate, it appears Latinos mostly drop out due to financial concerns but choose to remain based on their own perceptions of their academic performance and campus integration.

Aside from finances and academic performance, the next contributing factor for Hispanic college student withdrawal is the lack of integration into the college environment, which is "usually due to the failure of the student to secure sufficient contact with significant members of the campus community" (Castellanos & Jones, 2003, p. xiv). Rendon (2003) coined the phrase *validating experiences* to examine Latino/a college students' perceptions of acceptance and feelings of worth within campus activities and classroom discussions. Along with validation, a closely related construct is *cultural congruity.* Cultural congruity is defined as the "cultural fit or match between one's internal values and those of the university environment" (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003, pp. 80-81). The degree of cultural fit depends on whether the college students acculturate, or attempt to assimilate, into the dominant sociocultural system. In effect,

they question, “Do I belong here, or is it really a question of belonging? Am I succeeding because of the university setting or in spite of it?”

From a Latino-centered standpoint, Hernandez and Jacobs (2004) described *academic colonialism* or institutional practices that cause Latinos’ successful integration into the life of the academy but simultaneous disassociation from the student’s community of origin. Before developing institutional plans for inclusion, Hernandez and Jacobs conducted research to pinpoint the sources of structural discouragement keeping Latinos from attending and persisting through graduation at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. They used semistructured interviews with a random sample of 60 Latino/a students and found that different themes of support were essential to rectifying “institutional and attitudinal racism…[that] clearly stems from cultural and subcultural antipathies” (p. 21). Specifically, these authors identified needed support in the form of admissions and financial aid, faculty advising and mentoring, Latino-oriented publications and campus organizations, access to more Latino faculty and staff, and better connections between students’ families and the university. Like Hernandez and Jacobs, numerous researchers delineated the generally ignored but critical need for higher education institutions to better involve Latino students’ families and home communities (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Nora, 2003; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004; Valdes, 1996).

In becoming more cognizant of the institutional structures that marginalize Latinos, scholars (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Hurtado & Kaminura, 2003; Reyes & Halcon, 2001) noted that only a few studies have provided a contextually based investigation. To question issues that affect Latino/a students’ persistence in a particular

university setting, these scholars suggested that such an investigation should not solely target the barriers. In order to provide a fuller understanding of retention and satisfaction, the study also should illuminate the Latino/a college students who have overcome obstacles and succeeded in higher education. In this way, the addition of student voices in this study highlighted the types of interactions and experiences that should help all Latino/as feel welcomed and highly regarded in colleges and universities.

Given the findings that Latina/o students enrolled in higher education represent the lowest level of 4-year participation and graduation in comparison to the other racial/ethnic groups in the United States, this study was undertaken to provide insights surrounding both attrition and retention of Latina/os at one HBCU. To achieve increased retention, Hurtado and Kaminura (2003) strongly recommended,

> The institution needs to take a closer look at "dimensions that affect the climate for diversity, including their historical legacy (which may include practices that privilege some student groups over others), structural representation (number of Latina/or students, faculty, and staff), the psychological climate (e.g., how do students perceive the climate?), and behavioral dimensions (e.g., the nature of interactions between students, faculty and administrators)—which all affect the retention of Latina/os. Understanding these elements of an institution can paint a clearer picture of the climate Latina/os experience at four-year institutions. (p. 148)

Overall, it is important to pursue a comprehensive study to learn much about Mexican American college students who thrive in multicultural educational settings like an HBCU. This research expands the literature while benefiting both the future of HBCUs and that of Latino/a college student populations. It helps create and promote a Latina/o presence on the STU campus as well as expands the pride of place for HBCUs in the academy. Although Gloria and Castellanos (2003) looked at the psychosociocultural perspectives of both Latina/or and African American students at predominantly White institutions, there is an absence of research about Hispanics who have chosen to attend

HBCUs, and in particular, Mexican American teacher candidates who have selected this type of multiracial setting for their individual development and professional preparation.

Critical Research

Research Paradigm/Theoretical Frameworks

Paradigm describes the mind-set, or the constellations of beliefs, values, and techniques, that guide policies and actions shared by members of a given scholarly community (Pinar et al., 2000). When a paradigm becomes established and dominates public discourse, it is difficult for other systems of explanations or perspectives and values to emerge (Banks, 2004). Typically in education and social sciences, new paradigms compete with established ones and coexist. Noteworthy is the major paradigm shift that occurred when institutions, teachers, and researchers moved students from the margins to the center of scholarly inquiry and practice (Collins, 2000; Moses, 2004). The epistemological crisis arose from heated debates about who should speak for whom? Whose voice is legitimate? Cary (2001) responded to the queries, reminding the reader that no outsider can ever fully understand the culture and experiences of insiders or speak with moral authority about them.

This section of the literature review presents the strengths, limitations, voids, and implications for using three critical theoretical perspectives while drawing connections to the study. Of importance is the distinction scholars make between critical theories and practices. While the three perspectives are (a) CRT, (b) critical pedagogy, and (c) borderlands consciousness, the related classroom practices are sometimes referenced in the literature as *multicultural education* or *antiracist pedagogy*. However, some scholars

of CRT "make a sharp distinction between Critical Race Theory and multicultural education on the basis of the popular manifestations of multicultural education that pay little attention to racism and its intersections with other forms of subordination" (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004, p. 249). Meanwhile, the scholars who continue to endorse multicultural education frame this approach not simply as classroom practice, but as "explicitly politically guided practice" (p. 252). Beyond these differences, there remains a gap between theoretical goals for racial justice and class equity and the actual practices prevalent in schools, colleges, and communities (Pinar et al., 2000; Pizarro, 1999). Practice uninformed by critical reanalysis of how one understands social relations may end up reproducing the status quo (Banning, 1999; Cary, 2001; Cummins, 1996; Guajardo & Guajardo, 2002; Pinar et al., 2000; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004).

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

As an analytical framework, CRT was originally developed by legal scholars of Color to address social injustice and racial oppression in U.S. society. Some scholars would argue that the genealogy of CRT goes back to W. E. B. DuBois, Sojourner Truth, Cesar Chavez, and the Chicano and Black Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005; Tate; 1997). The role of CRT is not simply to understand the injustices of policies but to fashion arguments that may change existing beliefs, laws, and practices. Here lies my choice for grounding this study in CRT, because its emphasis is process-making transformation. It is a form of cultural praxis that embraces the conflict or tensions arising in a given situation while striving to democratize the process (King, 2001, 2005). Highlighted within this section of CRT are the major tenets, the analytic tools and methodologies rooted in various epistemologies, the suggestions and limitations

for making schooling responsive to criticalists' visions, and the ways CRT challenges injustices.

Major tenets, analytic tools, and methodologies. Tate (1997, 1999) outlined the three major tenets of CRT as follows:

1. CRT recognizes racism is endemic in U.S. society, challenges ahistorical scholarship, insists on contextual treatment, and recognizes experiential knowledge of People of Color.

2. CRT illuminates dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy as camouflages for the self-interest of powerful groups in society.

3. CRT crosses epistemological boundaries. In crossing epistemological boundaries, CRT absorbs elements and uses a wide variety of methodological tools from multiculturalism, feminism, liberalism, Marxism, pragmatism, poststructualism, and postcolonialism.

Also, CRT has expanded to include alternative approaches such as Latina/o CRT and self-critical studies, specifically Whiteness-interrogations (HuDehart, 2004; Hidalgo, 1999; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Tate, 1999). Today, a growing body of scholarship uses CRT as a framework to examine educational issues at both the K–12 and postsecondary levels and especially with diverse communities previously repressed or ignored (Banks, 1994, 2001, 2003; Britzman, 2003; Gay, 2004; Grant, Elsbree, & Fondrie, 2004; King, 2001; Nieto, 1996, 2002; Scheurich, 1993, 2002; Shor & Pari, 1999).

Suggestions and limitations for making schooling responsive. Critical activists are interested in making schooling responsive by transforming the relationships among race, racism, gender, class, and power (Hidalgo, 1999; Pinar et al., 2000; Villenas et al., 1999). What might responsive schooling look like? To answer the disparagement endured by youth, particularly Mexican American and African American students in American schools, scholars want to avoid the binary either/or approach (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1998, 2003). Valenzuela (1999) recommended the bicultural process, where students do not have to choose between being Mexican or American—they can be both. Additive schooling is especially about the maintenance of community "even if this means that the discourse gets politicized" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 270). Suggestions for improvements involve providing a more culturally sensitive curriculum to promote a profound understanding of Mexican American or Chicano ethnicity and to enhance the labor market status of U.S. Mexicans (and all other youth) in an increasingly global economy. Providing such cultural knowledge foundations means supporting empowerment of students as well as teaching multiple perspectives through counterstories (for example, historically about the Alamo or Battle of San Jacinto and currently with newspaper documentaries of immigration protests). It is not enough to illuminate the injustices and problems; one also should speak the native language of the students to be served. Rather, teacher candidates and teachers must have a firm grasp and understanding of the sociocultural, political, and economic context of educating all students.

With a focus on schooling for African Americans, Tate (1999) explained that much of the contemporary debate regarding CRT has been decontextualized and separated "from its African American intellectual roots" (p. 257). In contrast, other

writers are extremely critical of the view that racism, classism, and other disparities can be understood simply as a fixed and static set of beliefs, uniformly adhered to by certain groups and universally applied to others (like Black, Latina/o, or South Asian people). What these debates show is that racism, classism, sexism, and the like are inherently contradictory, changing over time and from one context to the next. The experiences of "–isms" and discrimination are likely to depend on the contexts in which they are located. Furthermore, such beliefs associated with them change over time. Banks and Banks (2004), Ladson-Billings (2003, 2004), Tate (1999), and King (2001, 2005), nonetheless, emphasized that research and schooling practices within communities of Color at least should meet some of the needs of the communities.

Ways CRT challenges injustices. As has been shown above, CRT can be a valuable tool to further cultural and economic social justice in educational practices. CRT is particularly useful as an analytical framework in examining "Chicana and Chicano students' struggles for equity and social justice in the classroom and at the state and national levels as legislation assaults their identity, national origin, and culture" (Villenas et al., 1999, p. 32). For example, "Culture has become the explanation for school failure, masking the fact that racism was the true cause of this failure" (Villenas et al., 1999, p. 46). Using CRT, scholars have "moved race from the borders to the center" as a theoretical lens, replacing the "cultural difference standpoint…being twisted and used by Anglos to maintain racial inequities within educational, political, economic, and social institutions" (Villenas et al., 1999, p. 45). A central principle of CRT methodology is to provide countertruths of racism, discrimination, and the like faced by Latinos/as, African Americans, and Others, through narratives and storytelling. In concert with social justice

efforts, CRT can be the "strong force, continually pressing for the rights of poor people and racial minority groups at the micro and macro levels" (Villenas et al., 1999, p. 33).

Villenas et al. (1999) have used CRT analysis to challenge broad inequities related to urban poverty and its impact on communities of Color and education. Through CRT analysis, these scholars have uncovered the deep patterns of exclusion to challenge how the power of the law is used against persons of Color and what is taken for granted with respect to privilege and race.

> Ethnography also captures the stories of people of color—stories that are about the daily indignities that communities of color suffer as well as the ways in which families maintain their dignity and cultural integrity….Such data are crucial to a rethinking of social action: The stories illustrate how communities' preservation of their cultural integrity has enabled them to survive hundreds of years of enslavement and genocide (Villenas et al., 1999, p. 35).

According to these scholars, a CRT perspective challenges the "market metaphors" that present school choice (university choice) as a solution for urban education problems. The lens of CRT is critical to interpreting the schooling experiences of Chicano/a students such as the "racism they encounter in schools, including lowered teacher expectations; dumbed-down curriculum; vocational tracking; and the absence of Chicano/Mexican history, culture, and language" (Villenas et al., 1999, p. 35). Thus, the goals of this study (to examine perspectives and experiences of Mexican American teacher candidates at one HBCU) align closely with the ultimate goals of CRT, two of which are to improve schooling experiences and ultimately to overturn systemic stratifications.

Many criticalists recognize that the foundations of CRT as an intellectual agenda have not necessarily guaranteed equitable practices. A major fault of CRT is the verdict that Whites have been the primary beneficiaries (King, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Pinar et al., 2000; Tate, 1999). Obviously, the preponderance of Whiteness is a valid

concern. Within this study (and elsewhere) as the White researcher, I must ask continually: Who is advantaged and disadvantaged by this type of exploration? I must give further consideration to Tate's denouncement, "The ideology of Whiteness creates cultural deficit models of thinking among teachers, faculty, and administrators toward students of Color" (p. 267). Tate further denounced White scholars who pursue CRT interrogations without clarifying the relationship of the researcher and the worth of the research to the people of Color. With these accusations in mind, I must establish my intentions: By employing CRT participatory research, I sought to name and change my own hegemonic practices and ultimately to support the teacher candidates' pursuit of critical action research in their own classrooms as well as their pursuit of graduate studies.

To be sure, in concert with study participants and the Black community, this type of CRT research must be linked to critical actions against discrimination. To guide such research, Tate (1999) recommended two criteria. First, CRT scholarship should explore the lives, successes, and marginalization of people of Color both within and outside the academy. Second, CRT scholarship should build on and expand studies already available in the critical race legal literature. In doing so, this scholarship must describe the limitations that push toward the "goal of true social justice" (Tate, p. 268). In my mind, the proposed study will fulfill the criteria proposed by Tate: (a) This study will explore the Mexican American teacher candidates' perspectives and experiences; and (b) it will greatly expand the absence of studies about Hispanics in higher education, particularly at HBCUs.

Critical Pedagogy

For clarity in this study, pedagogy will be defined as the art of teaching coupled with the relational aspect of care in teaching. It is "the *how* and in what *context* we learn what we learn" (Greene, 1996, p. 14). This focus on context acknowledges that the social and experiential sites of racial oppressions are crucial considerations in understanding racial dynamics and experiences of people of Color (Taylor, 1999). Talk about pedagogy and place is simultaneously talk about the *relational* aspects of cultural politics, which are relevant and meaningful to the multiple experiences and realities that students face (Freire, 1968; Guajardo& Guajardo, 2002; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). Talk of critical pedagogy is widespread. From the smorgasbord of offerings within this review, explanations will span seven areas: (a) critical pedagogy conditions and methodologies; (b) the significance of difference, relational behaviors, and cultural resources; (c) the work of caring theorists; (d) the importance of clarity in ideology and the roles of power, knowledge, and resistance formations; (e) the power of place; (f) the value of social and cultural capital; (g) and the identified critical pedagogy strengths, limitations, and problems that reproduce the status quo. Although indeed diverse, these multiple constructs of critical pedagogy appear salient to the study.

Conditions and methodologies. Greene (1996) insisted that critical pedagogy is not a one-size-fits-all methodology but rather a process and a space that must take into consideration historical, political, and social conditions as well as considerations of the participants and their relationships. Critical pedagogy must be relevant and meaningful to the multiple experiences and unique realities that the participants or students face. Critical pedagogy is the interdisciplinary process within the unique social or classroom

context where teachers and students engage in "critical dialogue in which the objective is the production of their own ideas and values rather than the mere reproduction of those of the dominant groups" (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996, p. 7). In this sense, theory and practice work actively through and not on students by helping students and their teachers to reflect on how domination works and subsequently to develop their own transformative practices. Leistyna and Woodrum wrote, "In becoming aware of both the positions they inhabit and the locations from which they speak, students are better able to take responsibility for their beliefs and actions" (p. 7). This culturally nurturing pedagogical process—that incorporates ways of seeing, knowing, and working together—appears especially valid for research located in a Black educational setting (King, 2005). Through this dialectical process, new alliances with Browns and Blacks can be formed. Through such a process, the study participants and I together might come to see and know new or different understandings. Educators must learn to critically view our positioning of alliances in society and need to be provided with examples of what social justice projects mean through actual practice.

Significance of difference, relational behaviors, and cultural resources. Critical pedagogy also draws upon the lived experience of scholars from a diversity of backgrounds, who cross the multiple and shifting layered relationships that constitute *politics of difference* (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Ellsworth, 1989; Freire, 1968; hooks, 1989, 1992, 1994, 1995, 2000, 2003a, 2003b; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1998; Lopez, 2004; McCarthy, 1996). "A pedagogy of difference is one in which the Other is neither exoticized nor demonized" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 35). Giroux (1996) found that understanding the works of bell hooks (1992) is crucial in articulating a critical

pedagogy, which demands a continual subversion of one's position. Giroux used the term *cultural workers*, which emphasized the agency of both teachers and students. Only by critically reflecting on their own roles in the schooling process and working to promote specific changes can teachers and students realize their challenge of the status quo in ways that are transformative rather than merely reformist (Cary, 2001; Cummins, 1996; Pinar et al., 2000; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). Critical pedagogy is explicitly, politically guided research and practice, not just an endorsement of multicultural education (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal).

Work of caring theorists. One outcome of critical theory and practice marks the increasing concerns of *caring theorists* (Goldstein, 1997, 1998; Greene, 1996; Noddings, 1992; Valenzuela, 1999). Caring theory addresses the need for research and pedagogy to follow from and flow through relationships cultivated between the teacher and student or between the researcher and participant. Goldstein (1997) debunked the commonly held simplistic understanding of caring so often characterized by smiles and gentle hugs. Goldstein (1998) showed that the "work of teacher-caring" is a complex intellectual challenge based on "deeply ethical, philosophical, and experiential roots" (p. 244). To me, the core of this study must be rooted in my commitment to ethics and caring. From my years of teaching, I well know how and why the complexities of caring go beyond the classroom, beyond the graded assignments and conversations. I have come to revere confidentiality, and I have come to appreciate shared journeys. Grounded in my years of teaching, my research, particularly this study within the HBCU, is sensitive to the intellectual, philosophical, and ethical challenges that arise from caring relations.

Noddings (1992) described as problematic educational research and teaching practices that have "relational caring in mind":

> Strictly speaking, there is no "we" to represent in this writing. What I want for our heterogeneous family (school, institution) may be different from what you want. As I explore…I must keep in mind that a practical translation of what I say must depend on dialogue: The question, *What kind of education would I want for them*? must be supplemented by the question, *What kind of education do you (they) want (for themselves)?* (p. 45)

Goldstein (1997, 1998) discredited researchers' illusions that collaborative investigations can be equitable and mutual partnerships. Goldstein explained, where serious power differentials separate the researcher from the participants, there is manipulation and exploitation inherent in any research relationship. Looking to others who have addressed such colonization and ethical complexities, Ellsworth's (1989) work has become a classic reminder of the messy entanglements of teaching while caring deeply about students. Similarly, through her negotiations with Latina mothers and their efforts for human agency, Villenas (1996, 2000) exposed the paradox of qualitative research as related to insider-outsider status, questioning the worth to the community versus the academy. Research indeed can be a strange bedfellow when concurrently one strives to please the academy and do good for the community.

Of significance in caring theory, difference is seen as a resource, not as an obstacle. Advancing the understanding of caring practice, Valenzuela (1999) differentiated between educational caring and subsequent teacher misunderstandings due to the less obvious undertones of authoritarianism and racism. Valenzuela explained the distinctions between *aesthetic caring* and *authentic caring*. Whereas American schools are structured around aesthetic attention to logistics and ideas, authentic caring involves attention to the nurtured and valued relationships. The concept of authentic caring affirms

sustained reciprocal relationships between teachers and students as the basis for all learning. Hence, Valenzuela substantiated that misunderstandings of caring are a fundamental source of Latino/a students' alienation and resistance to schooling in the United States. She found that schools (like Seguin High School) not only failed to validate their students' culture but also divested resources from them. Valenzuela (1999) established, "Teacher misunderstandings about the meaning of caring thus subtract resources from youth…by obliging students to participate in a non-neutral, power-evasive position of aesthetic, or superficial, caring" (p. 25). Once again, I stand in awe and fear of power components in caring relations. Once again, I heed the warnings of domination and hegemony, knowing that I must work to resist what is not in the best interest of the study participants and the community (Greene, 1996; King, 2005).

Importance of clarity of ideology. According to critical pedagogy scholars, the researcher and teacher's ideology must be examined within relations of power. Such examinations cannot easily be reduced to method or technique. Put a different way, even radical critical pedagogy teachers still may be teaching with traditional oppressive methods, and White teachers, in particular, need guidance in translating critical ideologies into practice. Critical pedagogy can open up very difficult and painful issues for students; therefore, all translations of critical pedagogy ideology into practice must go beyond typical lesson planning (Luttrell, 2003; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). "At minimum, critical work requires moving back and forth between a position of closeness and a position of distance for reflection…a measure of distanced reflection that is generative of new insight" (Banning, 1999, p. 171). Hence, within this study I must move back and forth collecting data and member checks to juxtapose the

insights from the literature against the analyses generated among colleagues, participants, and myself. As King (2005) noted, "Research informs practice and practice informs research in the production and utilization of knowledge" (p. 21).

Roles of power, knowledge, and resistance. Intertwined in such critical pedagogy actions are relationships of power and knowledge (McLaren, 2003). Lightly drawing from the work of Foucault's (1995) theories of power, in this study, power is considered as interrelated and strongly influenced by knowledge, and vice versa: Knowledge is strongly influenced by and interconnected with power. As demonstrated by Foucault, and further explained by Cary (2006), through all relationships and at the same time, power resides in and constitutes individuals. Hence, power not only complicates relationships but also assumes a multiplicity of forms, locations, and functions. Criticalists, therefore, look at the webs of power shaped by race, class, gender, religion, and ability (Omni, 2001).

One way in which groups and individuals exercise power is through the construction of hegemonic knowledge structures and naming of concepts (such as *at-risk*, *minority*, or *mentally retarded*) that benefit their own privileged hierarchies and institutions (Banks, 2001). According to Nieto (2002), the major difference between individual and institutional discrimination is the wielding of power. It is primarily through the power of officials who name "constructions" and control institutions that oppressive policies and practices are legitimized and reinforced by the individuals. Similarly, Cummins (1996) explained that the micro-level interactions between individual teachers and students generally reflect the macro-level relations of power in the broader society. In effect, most educators are not blatantly racists and oppressors, but

by failing to question social inequalities, they become unwittingly engaged in what Cummins termed *coercive relations of power*. Such practices suppress students' cultural identities by making them internalize the values imposed by the dominant group as natural, normal, and universal.

Typically, Othered students are made to feel that they do not fit in because there is something wrong with them, but not with the school or institution. These policies and relations invoke a *blaming the victim* approach (Hidalgo, 1999; King, 2001; Nieto, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). For example, school failure of subordinated group members is attributed to intrinsic characteristics of that group (like genetic inferiority, language deficits, or parental apathy) or to programs serving the interests of the group (e.g., bilingualism) (Cummins, 1996). In contrast, the 7 Mexican American teacher candidates in this study have chosen to assimilate, to "fit in," as successful college students amid the Black college experience. Thus, it seemed worthy of investigation to explore how these teacher candidates' perceptions and experiences have served their interests and ambitions.

Where there is power, there is also resistance (the tools to shift positions) (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Omni, 2001). Resistance theory originated during the 1980s when theorists and educators began to look to greater society to explain the failures of schooling. Since schools could not do everything for children and families, the hope was to mobilize society at large and to widen the focus to find other solutions beyond racial oppressions. At first the focus of resistance theory was to diminish deficit thinking, moving beyond dualisms, and to illuminate multiplicity of perspectives (Pinar et al., 2000). By employing resistance theory, criticalists strove to move beyond checking one's

individual or micro power to examining the macro role of the institution and systems that prohibit or legitimize relationships.

For Giroux (1992), resistance points to possibilities of *oppositional pedagogy,* whereas Banks (2003) has rallied for *equity pedagogy*. Other researchers have looked for ways to enhance positive resistance in the form of students' excelling academically (Cummins, 1996; Knapp & Woolverton, 2004, Valenzuela, 1999). Valenzuela (1999) sought to unmask the complexities of the complicit first-generation Mexican American student who excels in school, and Choe (1999) sought to expose the stereotype of the good Asian American student. According to these authors, such diverse students have learned to negotiate multiple worlds, shifting consciousness dependent on the political and structural contexts in which they find themselves. To pursue this line of inquiry, one questions how the phenomenon of the good student is viable in high-achieving Mexican American teacher candidates at one HBCU.

In contrast, researchers more frequently locate retaliatory resistance via forms of students' behavioral disruptions, withdrawal, passivity, or dropping out. Shifting the emphasis off students' resistance on to teachers' resistance, Hollins and Guzman (2005) spotlighted Rodriguez's (1998) findings of two types of resistance among preservice teachers: resistance to ideological change and resistance to pedagogical change. Hollins and Guzman (p. 491) concluded that any "counter-resistive strategy" must incorporate dialogue, a focus on metacognition and reflexivity, and the use of authentic activities to help teacher candidates overcome resistance and to begin to see teaching and learning as a socially constructed process. Hence, I believe that within teacher candidates, their dimensions of identity and resistance are tightly intertwined, and thus counterresistive

strategies of dialogue, reflexivity, and activities, such as this study offers, are worthy research pursuits.

Opponents of resistance pedagogy believe that this oppositional position actually romanticizes the potentials of working-class constituents (Roman, 1988, as cited in Pinar et al., 2000). In effect, educators who encourage minority or diverse students to be resistant in schools create the risk of further jeopardizing the students' education. Apple (1997) agreed that the terrain of resistance is more likely determined by the interests of capital or privilege and not necessarily in the interests of working-class student resistance. In turn, other scholars have argued that notions of resistance rightfully have been replaced by constructs of agency, identity, solidarity, marginalization, or popular culture (Pinar et al., 2000). What seems worthy to examine is the obvious absence of investigations about power knowledge and resistance within teacher candidates and within the Black college experience. How do strategies of survival align with passivity or resistance?

Power of place. As important as the "how" in critical pedagogy is the significance of the context in which knowledge and power merge. Hence, the notion of *pedagogy of place* has evolved. For example, hooks (1990) referenced "homeplace" as a site where identities are linked to place making and resistance. Haymes (2003) critically explored sites of Black urban struggle. St. Pierre (2000) revisited her childhood town in the South. Both Pillow (2000) and Luttrell (2003) considered and reconsidered body as the place from which to practice and critique knowledge, class, culture, and power. Guajardo and Guajardo (2002) transitioned readers from a "safe terrain" of privileged, well-trained academicians to the dynamics of a community center in South Texas. Interested in the

place or space where learning and politics meld, these ethnographers believe that if research about practice is lifted from the geographical or sociopolitical setting, it obscures the power of place—place making (Greene, 1996; Haymes, 2003; Pinar et al., 2000). At STU, the challenge of place making is twofold: While the institution struggles to maintain its pride of place in the community, it also struggles to sustain its significance of place in U.S. higher education. Such struggles seem analogous to hooks' (1990) "homeplace"—a site of pride and resistance. Within this study, therefore, the historical, cultural, political, economic, and social manifestations of place are integral to the research, practices, and relations to be examined.

According to Giroux (1992), when examining the power of place, it is crucial to recognize that knowledge and power formations are both "the conditions of institutions and the effects of institutions" (p. 29). For example, school bureaucracies were formed and have evolved based on the premise that organizations should be governed by an elaborate system of regulations. Over time, the schools and institutions of higher learning have become gridlocked by increasing political, economic, and social pressures. The consequence of such "top down, one best way" bureaucratization of schools is "an alienation of students and a demoralization of teachers" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 259, 261). Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) work revealed,

> Negotiations of identities in multilingual settings frequently occur in encounters where relations of power are unequal…such encounters are profoundly influenced by the social, cultural political, and historical setting in which they occur….Unequal negotiation outcomes may take place between individuals, between majority and minority groups, and most importantly, between institutions and those they are supposed to serve. (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. vii, 3)

What matters for this study is an eye on negotiations of identities profoundly influenced or not influenced by encounters at, and with, the HBCU setting. Such encounters and

negotiations have particular significance, because STU occupies a section of the inner city, not unlike the urban settings of numerous public schools.

Using the concept of power, Haymes (2003) interpreted positionality, struggles, and pedagogical practices of Black city life. Since cultural identity is associated with and organized around territory, Haymes explained, "Places are significant because we assign values to them in relation to our cultural projects…the fusion of space and experience" (p. 212). Furthermore, by withdrawing or redeveloping the sphere of public physical space that historically belongs to Black people in cities, "urban Blacks are less able to sustain the networks of family and friends necessary for organizing their experiences into a collective identity…For Blacks, the loss of land also means a loss of community" (Haymes, p. 221). As the destruction of neighborhoods, gentrification, and displacement continue to occur within the cities, Haymes has enacted a pedagogy of place for Blacks to interpret social reality in liberating ways. Such pedagogy should augment the loss of place-making memories to help Black people "come to voice" (a) to confront colonization, erasure, or assimilation and (b) to create "new meanings of Blackness and Black identity" in the cities (Haymes, p. 228).

Indeed, Haymes' (2003) spotlight on pedagogy of place holds merit for this study, in which 7 Mexican American teacher candidates are situated in a historically Black educational setting. Haymes' objective—just as the motive of many HBCU alumni—is to sustain Black identities in the city, especially those places historically owned by Blacks. Displacement problems of many poor city inhabitants echo those faced by Black families who lived adjacent to STU for many years. Haymes pointed to cultural intellectuals, like architects, real estate agents, and bankers finding that they present upscale images of

development and gentrification that shield the destruction of working-class neighborhoods in which the inhabitants have no voice. Although I agree with Haymes, I am also disappointed that Haymes focused primarily on Blacks' struggles to the exclusion of other multiethnic groups. According to West (1991, as cited in McKenna, 2003), any "notion of pristine culture falls by the wayside…cultures are always already hybrid" (p. 432). Like an urban city, already the Black college is a hybrid of identities where diversity can serve as an enhancement phenomenon (C. Willie et al., 2006). Like the potential of urban inhabitants, the Black college community could respond collectively in ways to acknowledge that the presence of Others benefits and does not harm the integrity of the HBCU. Such responses could create greater cultural verve and economic vitality. Therefore, this study sought to exhibit portraits in which Others enhance rather than subtract from a HBCU's power of place.

Value of social and cultural capital. Within the context of space or place, numerous scholars have investigated the cognitive, behavioral, and relational aspects—the widespread value—of *social and cultural capital* (Bartolome, 1996; Elenes, 2003; Freeman, 2005; Freire, 1968; Knapp & Woolverton, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Luttrell, 2003; Olneck, 2000; Nieto, 2002; Pizarro, 2005; Valdes, 1996; Villenas, 1996, 2000). Valenzuela (1999) defined social capital as "the exchange networks of trust and solidarity among actors wishing to attain goals that cannot be individually attained" (p. 21). Similarly, Freeman explained "social capital as the networks that provide information, social norms, and achievement support" (p. 142). Giroux (1992) and others have furthered the concept of cultural capital, made popular by Pierre Bourdieu. Cultural capital refers to the cultural knowledge, dispositions, and skills that are passed on from

one generation to another and that exit in the embodied state (attitudes of mind and body), the objectified state (artifacts such as pictures and books), and the institutional state (students' traits inscribed by and linked to social class standing) (McLaren, 2003). Cultural capital and social capital are related, but there is a difference: Cultural capital refers to specialized behaviors or artifacts that make one accepted at different levels of society, whereas social capital references the relations and relationships among persons. As a result, students are provided different educational opportunities by different institutions (schools) based on the types of social and cultural capital they bring. Unfortunately, the practice of tapping students' existing social and cultural bases "is not commonly utilized with student populations traditionally perceived as deficient" (Bartolome, 1996, p. 239). In turn, the more individuals are able to meet the established institutional standards, the more they are accepted by and assimilated into the institution or controlling population (Freeman, 2005).

Of interest in this study are the Mexican American teacher candidates' negotiations of social and cultural capital within a HBCU setting that honors Blackness. Are Mexican American students' constructs of social and cultural capital manifested as deficits or assets? Ada and Zubizarreta (2001) warned that too often, mainstream exponents of social or cultural capital have begun with the assumption that differences of social or cultural expressions represent deficits. This, in turn, has led to the false conclusion that schools' limited effectiveness with certain populations can be blamed on the supposedly weak social or cultural capital of those communities. In effect, it is another example of blaming the victim. Fortunately, criticalists now challenge educational systems where normalized knowledge serves to maintain asymmetrical social

relations. Instead, criticalists call for institutional systems that accept as valid the kinds of knowledge and experiences that students bring to school (Giroux, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2002). Premised on the fact that the Mexican American teacher candidates in this study have excelled while attending a HBCU, it is significant to ask why. One key is to explore how the institutional acceptance of Others' cultural and social knowledge is perceived and negotiated by the Mexican Americans teacher candidates at STU.

Identified strength and limitations that reproduce status quo. Critical pedagogy creates and nourishes opportunities for those who live in the margins to move to the center "to learn, teach, and practice the art of knowing, the science of asking, and the reality of being" (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2002, p. 282). Yet, such vitality spawns "multiple versions," and there is "no generic definition that can be applied to the term—critical pedagogy" (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996, p. 3). Fueling this enterprise is the process where "with every action taken, the context changes and we must critique our assumptions again" (Crotty, 1998, p. 157). In this way, critical pedagogy is an ongoing project, better seen as a spiraling process of reflection and action. In critical pedagogy, *praxis* serves as the conscious intersections of theory and emancipatory knowledge and actions intended to alter ideological, political, economic, cultural, or social justice circumstances (Crotty; Freire, 1968; McLaren, 2003; Ovando & McLaren, 2000). Since criticalists radically call into question culture and what it informs, a critical pedagogical approach appears in tandem—one and the same—with a study of Mexican American teacher candidates in a HBCU. As Crotty explained, culture and oppression have "many faces and concern for only one form of oppression at the expense of others can be

counterproductive because of the connections between them" (p.158). Hence, this study must explore such productive and counterproductive connections.

Writings about critical pedagogy are vast and diverse. In part, critical pedagogy is expressed through voice, through stories that students and researchers or students and teachers tell each other. Voice refers to the "cultural grammar" and background knowledge that students and teachers employ to understand experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1999; McLaren, 2003). Yet, teacher education programs and classroom practices are largely bereft of this dialogue and its plausible contributions. One probable cause of limited dialogue, as cited by Sleeter and Delgado-Bernal (2004), is that critical pedagogy is widely misunderstood and misinterpreted. Since many teachers find critical pedagogy theoretical writings so conceptually dense, many have failed to understand how to implement it. Primarily, critical pedagogy is misinterpreted because educators avoid examining the underlying oppressions and power relationships that structure educational settings. For example, misinterpretations assume multiple forms: in the ways students are perceived, treated or alienated; in the ways students are instructed (or not taught) to make meaning of commonplace events and curriculum; and the types of training that preservice teachers receive (or do not receive) to better serve children (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal).

Beyond instruction, teachers need to understand and value the knowledge, dispositions, and concerns that students bring to school. Schools must embrace how daily indignities take their toll on people of Color. "When these indignities are skimmed over in classrooms…it is no wonder students 'blow off' classroom discourse about…good citizenship" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 19). Regrettably, few teachers and students ever

engage in pedagogical discussions about the options and risks of disrupting oppressive relations within institutions or the greater society (Freire, 1968; Giroux, 1992; Valenzuela, 1999). That is not the case with my teaching practices at STU. Typically, we open every lesson with discussions of current events on campus or from newspapers to provoke thoughts and actions to disrupt oppressive societal practices. In turn, I listen to learn from my teacher candidates' viewpoints and concerns.

Making students aware of the sources of conflict through autobiographical writing and dialectical thinking about social realities is not easily taught in a society that actively discourages individuals from raising difficult questions, involving identity construction, purpose, and the making of culture (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Pinar et al., 2000). This is to say, institutional leaders rarely oppose programs operating in their own self-interest and generally negate opportunities for Others to do so (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996; Tate, 1999). In other words, for this critical pedagogy study to be transformative, I must inform STU leaders as to how full acknowledgement of Mexican American students' experiences in the Black university will generate educational, cultural, and economic benefits.

Even when claiming to change, teachers or institutions seem to reproduce the status quo via the hidden curriculum and hegemony. Alarming is the news that even the most progressive critical researcher or critical program has been found to reproduce dominant ideology. Intentionally or unintentionally, teachers actively have reproduced the asymmetrical power relations of the workplace in their classrooms (Cummins, 1996; Freeman, 2005; King, 2005; Kozol, 1991; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). Even the attempts to create a diverse education often fall short. As Ladson-Billings (1999)

reported, classroom demonstrations of multiethnic education (singing ethnic songs, eating ethnic foods, and doing ethnic dances) are shallow and trivial celebrations of diversity.

The shortcomings of the diversity attempts are exacerbated by the hidden curriculum and hegemony that is a part of traditional multicultural education. Hidden curriculum deals with the tacit ways students' knowledge and behaviors get constructed, outside the curriculum and formal lessons, as "part of the bureaucratic and managerial press of the school" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 248). Hegemony refers to an ideological process or outcome, "achieved through ideological coercive practices," that points to the exclusion of some groups from the "transmission of class cultures such as school knowledge" (Pinar et al., pp. 250-251). Hegemony imposes the dominant point of view of a given society (Greene, 1996). Put another way: hegemony refers "to a cultural encasement of meanings, a prison-house of language and ideas" instigated through the "intellectual leadership of a dominant class over a subordinate class" (McLaren, 2003, p. 77). Hidden curriculum and hegemony are treacherous forces to be tackled—especially since the greater part of Teacher Education curriculum is mandated by State Teacher Certification Standards. Ironically, this mandated curriculum model should not (and does not) differ significantly from courses taught in predominantly White institutions (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; C. D. Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004). In heeding scholars' advice, the best route is to thoroughly inform the study participants and all STU teacher candidates about the stealth grip of hidden curriculum and hegemony in order to fortify them with information to counter such harms. Additionally, the teacher candidates should be included in decisions for making positive change (Franquiz, 2001) and to more fully understand learning/teaching as a political act (Delgado-Bernal, 1999; Freire, 1968;

Freire & Macedo, 1996; hooks, 1994). Nonetheless, Green (1996) argued, "Public school teachers, subordinated as they [are] in the solidifying educational bureaucracies, seldom [speak] the language of resistance or transcendence" (p. 20).

Such repressive ideologies were elucidated by Ellsworth (1989) in her praxis article entitled, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?" After using critical inquiry with a graduate class of multiracial students, Ellsworth denounced her shortcomings, believing her work "failed" the students whom she most intended to be heard. Ellsworth (1989) found the reflexive process painful, yet imperative:

> The desire by the mostly white, middle-class men who write the literature on critical pedagogy to elicit "full expression" of student voices…becomes voyeuristic when the voice of the pedagogue himself goes unexamined. (p. 312)

Inabilities to perceive and examine power within critical inquiry are often rooted in the highly politicized terrain of White bias. For example, White bias often foregrounds social class over race, ethnicity, or gender. Consequently, "White theorists do not resolve the problem of Whites having the power.…White writers still produce silences and assumptions that arise from lived experiences" (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004, p. 244). Elenes (2003) warned that any privilege of White theorists to question identities needs to be examined critically, because the power to name such issues deeply affects those whose interests are to be served in the process. Such remarks about the dangers of White researchers and White bias continue to haunt me. Embracing the paradox of wanting to help but fearing to harm Others, I proceed with caution and willingly solicit the vigilance of participants and colleagues to keep my interests in check.

As I continued to reflect on the multitude of constructs emerging from critical pedagogy, I strove to connect the dots between the current study and the constructs of critical pedagogy, all of which seem strangely diverse. Only after further exploration

would I begin to understand which intersections of constructs and subjectivities are most important to the participants in this study.

By listening to participants' stories, we can begin to understand how subjectivities are fluid and ever changing. It was the limited analyses of overlapping intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality that caused Black educators to develop Commission on Research in Black Education (CORIBE) methodology (King, 2001, 2005) and Chicano/a scholars to develop borderlands consciousness (Anzaldua, 1999, 2002; Calderon & Carreon, 2000; McKenna, 2003). For example, "Giroux's notion of critical pedagogy became border pedagogy, including terms linked to territorialization…requiring a social vision as a pedagogy of remembrance, a pedagogy of possibility" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 285). According to Elenes (2003), critical pedagogy and borderlands consciousness overlap and share similarities; however, crucial differences prevail.

Borderlands Consciousness

Borders refer to the spaces—within and between—what were once sanctified as homogenous communities (McKenna, 2003). Borders emphasize separation and difference as well as comfort and familiarity. Anzaldua (1999) explained, "A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge." *Border crossers* are individuals who live their lives moving between two cultures, invariably creating a third space in the process (Anzaldua, 1999). *Borderness* is a consciousness of living in the borderlands and an empathetic tool to understand discomfort, excitement, contradictions, conflict, solidarities, and struggles (McKenna). The *borderlands* are the boundaries where subordinated groups live that form a state of belonging and not belonging to those communities:

> These boundaries are the interstices between the so-called First and Third Worlds, Anglo-Americans and the symbolic spaces that confine people of Color in the metropolis, and the formal and informal economy (the legal and the illegal)…between cores and peripheries and centers and margins. (Elenes, 2003, p. 195)

Borderlands consciousness evolved as "Mexican-Americans, Chicanos, or mestizos began to project themselves as positive yet also, critical in rendering their bilingual and bicultural experiences as a resistive measure against Anglo-American economic domination and ideological hegemony" (Elenes, 2003, p. 195). Among marginalized groups, the consciousness of the borderlands is the vortex of differences based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, politics, or age. The only way to survive the borderlands is to live in the crossroads, to acknowledge a multiplicity of cultural differences, and to tolerate ambiguity (Anzaldua, 1999; McKenna, 2003). A tolerance for ambiguity is understanding that "many of our families never crossed the border between Mexico and the United States. The border crossed us" (Santos, as cited in Pinar et al., 2000).

Chicano theorists developed borderland consciousness (Anzaldua, 1987, 1999; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Villenas, 1996, 2000; Delgado-Bernal, 1999) to describe their experiences of living in contradictory multiple realities of ethnicity, language, nationality, and sexuality. Seeing borderland consciousness as a transformative state rather than an oppressive one, Chicana theorists also are committed to relating academic knowledge to the community as well as relating *la communidad* to academic understandings (Schmitz, Butler, Guy-Sheftall, & Rosenfelt, 2004). The concept of borderlands has gained currency because it can explain the situations of peoples all over the globe, not only in the Southwest (see Hermes' 1999 work with First Nation People and Choe's 1999 writings about Asian Americans). It is a discourse, a language, with identities that are in

constant flux, and it is a discourse that explains the social conditions of subjects with hybrid identities (Elenes, 2003).

I note that, in contrast to explanations previously examined about CRT and critical pedagogy, the descriptions of border crossers and of border consciousness seem more personal. The explanations target the human aspects, defining the uniqueness of people whose identities are in constant flux dependent on the contexts in which they are situated. Also, these descriptions correspond to my initial impressions of the 7 Mexican American teacher candidates in this study. I had heard the teacher candidates share insights about living in contradictory realities, which include negotiations of experiences at STU. Seemingly, the bicultural spaces inhabited by the teacher candidates and the process of attending STU create a third space: a borderland (Anzaldua, 1999). In order to better understand the creation and crossing of the borderland, six major aspects of border consciousness emerged: (a) the geopolitical origin and cognitive and relational nature of borders, (b) rethinking masked relations of power, (c) the denouncement of essentialist notions of difference, (d) the problems of White scholars using border pedagogy, (e) borderlands pedagogical tools, and (f) the significance of border scholarship.

Geopolitical origin and cognitive and relational nature. The conceptualization of a border is rooted in a geopolitical origin but becomes cognitive and relational in nature (McKenna, 2003; Pugh, Ovando, & Schonemann, 2000). Historically, Central Texas (generally situated in the areas surrounding Austin) represented the border between the cotton-growing lands of slavery and the ranching lands of Mexican labor. At the end of the 19th century, the populations from these two geographically and culturally distinct regions began to overlap. By 1900, large numbers of Mexicans, along with African

Americans, came to form the labor supply in this predominantly Anglo region (Gutierrez, 2004). N. Foley (1990, as cited in Gutierrez) explored the complex triangular relationships among Anglos, Blacks, and Mexican immigrants in Central Texas. Two often-contradictory representations of the Mexican immigrant emerged in the scholarly literature and public policy. According to Gutierrez,

> The Mexican Immigrant has been viewed either as a problem that threatens the racial, hygienic, and economic basis of life in the United States or as a valuable asset that contributes to American prosperity by performing tasks at wages that citizen workers will not accept, and by contributing taxes from which the immigrant rarely benefits. (p. 266)

The themes of these ongoing debates have been remarkably consistent. As seen in the anti-immigrant hysteria and Mexican American protests during spring of 2006, the average U.S. citizen "probably embodies attitudes about immigrants from both viewpoints" (Gutierrez, p. 266). However, both themes historically have generated within the U.S. citizenry and public school personnel "the deficit view of seeing minority students as culturally in need of fixing" (Bartolome, 1996, p. 229). Both viewpoints, or protests, are vitally connected to the exercise and protection of the human right to food, clothing, shelter, health care, and education.

A classroom serves as a border just as a highway (like Interstate 35 in Austin, Texas) signifies a border (separating inhabitants in the east from those who live in the west). The issue is not a simple we/they oppositional space, because "we are all implicated in the chasm between the first and the third worlds" (McKenna, 2003, p. 431). As such, the classroom, like the border, becomes "a transitory space" (p. 438). Subsequently, should the Black college also be considered a transitory space—a political border that offers a positioning of Otherness as well as comfort and familiarity (Pugh et al., 2000)?

The HBCU is also implicated in the chasms and rhetoric of diversity. Within the HBCU, if people can "understand difference as the common cultural reference point, it becomes the basis for unity" (McKenna, 2003, p. 432). Such a chasm is not necessarily negative, but rather through unity becomes hopefulness. As always, bell hooks (1984) said it best when she spoke of the margins, the borders, not as a site to lose or give up, but rather as "a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist. [Borders] offer to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds" (p. 149-150).

Whether or not teachers are effective with diverse students is above all a question of their political and ideological clarity (Bartolome, 1996; Nieto, 2001). Unfortunately, most teachers have failed to acknowledge that the major problem facing Latino students in U.S. schools is "not that Latinos speak Spanish (many do not), but that their identities as Latinos are dismissed as resources in the development of literacy…they speak a devalued language and share a largely disrespected culture" (Nieto, 2001, p. ix). In Anzaldua's writings, the only way to survive the borderlands is to acknowledge the multiplicity of difference and to acquire a tolerance for ambiguity. Anzaldua (1999) concluded that we all must empathetically project ourselves into the borderland, and from there, "to survive, you must live *sin fronteras*/be a crossroads" (p. 195).

Once again, in drawing a line from research in border consciousness to the current study, we can view both STU teacher candidates and the HBCU as existing within and being a crossroads. "Being a crossroads promotes an articulation of difference…it also means living as an intersection of all the border spaces that define: race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, gender" (McKenna, 2003, p. 435). Certainly, the teacher candidates live in the

crossfire, juggling working-class responsibilities while better defining their own identities as future Hispanic teachers. Also, to survive, the HBCU must reveal how the presence of non-Black students garners good educational and economic outcomes without harming the historical mission of the HBCU (C. Willie et al., 2006). Numerous articles have underscored the complexity and necessity for such projects to articulate the value in multiplicity of cultures. For example, McKenna (2003) described the problematic nature: "If the subjectivities of the teacher and students are not questioned, exposed, integrated into the process of the classroom, then the reading or even rereading of texts will not make a qualitative difference" (p. 435).

Although Anzaldua instigated borderlands consciousness-raising, it was Giroux (1992) who situated border pedagogy within the broader cultural, political, and institutional arenas. Giroux linked the notion of schooling and the broader category of education to a more substantive struggle for a radical democratic society (Pinar et al., 2000). Giroux (1992) advocated, "Border pedagogy must take up the dual tasks of not only creating new objects of knowledge but also addressing how inequalities, power, and human suffering are rooted in basic institutional structures" (p. 29)**.** McKenna said we must ask ourselves as educators, "What is our objective in the classroom? Is it to 'expose' students…or is it to transform their and our relationship to culture?" (2003, p. 435). Her question aims at the heart of this study. That is, to merge the research process and participants' relationships to reveal diversity as enhancement as well as exposure to new ideas. McKenna, nonetheless, warned that illumination of transformations of consciousness in classrooms is at best activated, but never secure.

Rethinking masked relations of power through empowerment. Just as power rises as a major concern in critical pedagogy, in border pedagogy power is interrogated, but is examined somewhat differently. To explain, I find that scholars of border pedagogy "empower" by using a partnership approach between educator and students to mutually name and rethink issues of power. This psychic construction process does not rest solely on the teacher's ability, but also positions students as agents. Educating students who have experienced subordination is not solely a pedagogical issue, but also a political-ideological issue (Bartolome & Balderrama, 2001). Villenas, Godinez, Elenes, and Delgado-Bernal (2005) explained that border pedagogy creates "partnerships that respect and work from the power of relationships and sensibilities born of life's work in straddling fragmented realities" (p. 8). For example, McKenna organized a college class around Chicano literature. According to McKenna, each participant in some fashion became an educator and a student within the decentering process. From the readings and class discussions, the students expressed confusions, contradictions, conflict, and solidarities. McKenna found the students' discomfort in this type of "multiple-voices class" was analogous to experiencing the border. It was a place of creative learning. Giroux (1992) also described using border pedagogy to rethink relations between the center and the margins of power and to challenge those institutional and ideological boundaries that historically have masked relations of power behind complex forms of privilege. I heed the advice from border scholars to empower students to co-investigate power relations in institutions and among the diverse voices that speak a multiplicity of cultures. As stated earlier, investigations of power relations are new ventures for me. Even so, the vast writings by notable scholars about power have convinced me to further

contemplate power. As Foucault (1977/1990) illuminated, power is productive, but its effects can be either oppressive or emancipatory. With this understanding, I wondered how power's forces would be revealed and constructed through the perspectives and experiences of Mexican American teacher candidates at a HBCU. What emerged was the realization that power's consequences, advantages, and plausible changes and the movement back and forth between theories and practice must be considered (Banning, 1999).

Elenes (2003) recommended the following questions: Who wields the power? Who is the subject of border pedagogy? How do we account for notions of difference? How do we avoid the marginalization of the Other? How do we construct a Chicana/o border pedagogy without reifying the Chicana/o subject? With these questions, Elenes' objective is to not make the modernist mistake of essentializing the minority subject as unified, or inferior, or static. Such a pursuit would need to take into account "the many contradictions and discontinuities within the Chicana/o subjects…[in which] identity and difference are bound together" (p. 204). Elenes stated it is possible to "construct a Chicana identity that is always in process" (p. 207). According to Elenes, border pedagogy helps participants to understand that all knowledge is constructed and helps them to decenter Eurocentric thought.

Denouncement of essentialist notions of difference. Elenes (2003) identified a similarity and dissimilarity between critical pedagogy and Chicana/o borderlands. Basically, the likeness and dissimilarity center on the conceptualization of difference. Elenes (2003) focuses on Giroux and McLaren's respective work in borderlands pedagogy: "Both [theorists] apply the concept [of borderlands] as a metaphor and both

rely on each other to advance their respective theories…but the interrelationship raises the problematic of appropriation and erasure of difference" (p. 199). While Giroux centered on antiracist border pedagogy, McLaren focused on predatory culture advanced by capitalism and economic terrorism. According to Elenes' critique, McLaren and Giroux's "critical pedagogy does not specify how differences are incorporated into their projects…difference is subsumed under the universal categorization 'student'" (p. 201). In effect, Giroux has called for students to cross borders but has not specified conditions for students who are already border crossers. Elenes continued by explaining that these theorists' discussions about difference have relied on essentialist notions, and too often "difference is equated with deviance" (p. 202). For example, "people of Color did not constitute themselves as different…they were constituted as such by patriarchy and colonialism" (Elenes, p. 202).

Borderlands consciousness centers on difference because notions of difference grow out of unequal power relations. "If differences are going to be constituted in nonessentialist ways, it is necessary to mark, deconstruct, and decenter whiteness and privilege" (Elenes, 2003, p. 202). Bartolome and Balderrama (2001) also faulted Giroux and McLaren's work for not recognizing their own positions of dominance and higher status when working with poor and non-White people. As a result, Bartolome and Baltodano stated Giroux and McLaren "emerge from their experiences even more bound to their unquestioned, classist, and White supremacist ideologies" (p. 62).

To diminish the deleterious effect of power relations in this study, I continued to acknowledge the warnings by Elenes and Bartolome and Baltodano. I continued to be explicit and up front about my dual role as both instructor and researcher. I honored all

inquiries from the study participants. With vigilance through conferences with students and colleagues as well as journaling reflective field notes, I have questioned my supremacist ideologies, learning from these experiences to improve subsequent instruction.

Problems of White scholars using border pedagogy. Elenes (2003) argued that a White scholar's use of critical pedagogy or border pedagogy, even when standing in solidarity with people of Color, runs the risk of maintaining asymmetrical positions between Whiteness and Chicanos, and between Whiteness and Others. Anzaldua (1999) wrote, "The dominant white culture is killing us slowly with its ignorance…ignorance splits people, creates prejudices" (p. 108). Anzaldua (1999) maintained that Whites must be helped by people of Color to envision a changed society:

> The struggle is inner: Chicano, *indio*, American Indian, *mojado*, *mexicano*, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian—our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads. (p. 109)

Knowing I desire an envisioned change, I perused Anzaldua's next book, *This Bridge We Call Home* (Anzaldua & Keating, 2002). At first I was surprised, and then not: In the preface to the book, Anzaldua (2002) has dissected the terms of White and women of Color "by showing that whiteness may not be applied to all whites, as some possess women-of-color consciousness, just as some women of color bear white consciousness" (p. 2). I am pleasantly surprised and deeply grateful that Anzaldua has declared space for anti-racist White women. Anzaldua's (2002) intention is to alter notions of identity into more "complex, permeable terrain…to move beyond separate and easy identifications, creating bridges that cross race and other classifications" (p. 2). She explained,

> Our goal is not use differences to separate us from others, but neither is it to gloss over those differences…Though most people self-define by what they exclude, we define who we are by what we include—what I call the new tribalism....Imagination, a function of the soul, has the capacity to extend us beyond the confines of our skin, situation, and condition so we can choose our responses. (Anzaldua, 2002, p. 3, 5)

As a White researcher and teacher, I am grateful that the forward thinker, Anzaldua, is forging pathways in academe, building "the bridges we call home." I wanted this study (my teaching, and my life) to nurture "new tribalism." Just as Anzaldua's words create bridges, I believed this study had potential to build bridges that cross race and other classifications.

Borderlands pedagogical tools. Like Anzaldua (1997, 1999, 2002), Elenes (2003) and McKenna (2003) found Chicano/a narratives counterhegemonic. Called *counterstories*, these accounts reveal perspectives of racism long silenced. "Counterstories challenged the perceived wisdom of those at society's center…and can facilitate transformation in education" (Yosso, 2006, p. 15). For example, Delgado-Bernal (1999) uses the unique viewpoints in Chicana literature to nourish cultural intuition, transformational resistance, and recovery. Another example, promoted by Elenes, is to encourage teachers and students to deconstruct myths to see how historical narratives portray conflictual and contradictory positions. Elenes cited the female figure, Malintzin, in Mexican and Chicana/o cultures, whose services and role in the conquest have been constructed as a traitor. Tracing the different constructions of Malintzin serves as a vehicle to understanding how knowledge is flexible and political. Here, border pedagogy functions as contertext or countermemory, helping us to understand and alter the present via a changed relationship to the past (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991).

Other valuable tools in border pedagogy are the inclusion of the arts and popular culture (the diversity-related issues in music, literature, clothing, movies, art, and dance). The arts and popular culture can afford credibility to cultural difference, especially among the everyday lives of working-class students (Cortes, 2004; Giroux, 1992; Haymes, 2003; Pinar et al., 2000). In the school curriculum, both the arts and popular culture can serve as countertext to challenge and transform institutional racism (Yosso, 2006). Anzaldua (1999) maintained that the arts have the power to transform the artist as well as the larger social context within which the art exits. According to Anzaldua, society and persons are inextricably linked such that transformation and insight on a personal level alters the larger context. Working with Chicano high school students, Franquiz (2001) incorporated the arts via student-made murals and a video about lowriders to help them effectively communicate their opposition to cultural stereotypes. Greene (1996) maintained the arts, like poetry, function as pedagogies in the sense that they aim at raising the awareness and consciousness of those willing to heed. Greene suggested that the arts create spaces between the artist, student, and viewer and what envelopes and surrounds the people: "Where there are spaces like that, desire arises, along with hope and expectation" (p. 16). Giroux (1992) utilized the arts not simply for aesthetics, but also as attempts to reveal ethics, power, and politics primary for a democratic life. The arts can link questions of representation and production of knowledge to issues of subjectivity, power, and meaning. Giroux (1992) suggested situating paintings, photography, dance, or media as forms of social criticism "mobilized as oppositional aesthetics of questions of race, class, and gender" (pp. 207-208).

Sadly, I perceive much irony in reading that the arts can create credibility to cultural difference among the everyday lives of working-class students, because in public schools and many small universities, typically the arts are the first cuts in institutional budgets. At STU, there are limited offerings of aesthetics, beyond the choral music program. This is not to say that the teacher preparation program, cannot nourish social criticism via aesthetics and pedagogical choices. In the AERA report, *Studying Teacher Education* (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), the definition of pedagogy speaks not only to the relational aspects, but also to ethical responsibilities in determining types of classroom instruction interaction and assignments:

> Also in pedagogy are the more relational aspects of teaching and learning such as the relationships established among teachers and students and how they shape what prospective teachers learn. Tasks or assignments represent a crucial ingredient in the pedagogy of teacher education, as they focus students' attention on particular problems of practice and introduce them to ways of reasoning or performing (Grossman, 2005, p. 426).

In the same AERA report, Hollins and Guzman (2005) reported that diversity issues are generally optional, or add-on, and not well integrated into teacher preparation as a whole. However, Hollins and Guzman suggested that the problems and issues in preservice teacher preparation could provide the impetus for scholarly inquiry. In turn, the results of the inquiry could advance practices and inform subsequent research. This type of dynamic relationship echoes the intentions of border theories and the richness of this study.

Even though most educators bemoan the predatory nature of popular culture, Willis (2005) suggested we look beyond the products of popular culture to help students separate the predatory nature from the creative and entertaining. Willis concluded that within such cultural practices lies a new awareness of identity within the individual or

group. In the curriculum, both the arts and popular culture offer dialectical sites to be mined for new kinds of cultural spheres. Giroux (as cited in Willis) explained that the critical educator endorses tools that are foremost dialectical—that is, deliberations that recognize the problems of society as more than simply isolated events of individuals or of deficiencies in the social structure. Hence, through popular culture, students can be helped to find less exploitative ways to negotiate cultural production and consumption. Within educational settings, teachers and students can question, "How did these cultural fetishes become commodities and with what effects?" (Willis, p. 476). For preservice teachers, it appears promising to incorporate the arts, counterhegemonic literature, and pop culture to reveal and deliberate social justice issues within class discussions and assignments. Still, there are voids in the literature about such pedagogical tools for teacher preparation. Most reports about teacher education focus on curricular issues, structural issues, or the length of programs, but not on issues of instruction or pedagogical approaches (Grossman, 2005).

Significance of border scholarship. According to Elenes (2003), the efforts and struggles of border consciousness and the Chicana/o movement have increased the presence of Chicana/o students in higher education, creating new academic spaces to study and producing "significant scholarship that contributes to the reconceptualization of American intellectual canons" (p. 194). Bartolome and Balderrama (2001) have found that teachers and other educators have become change agents to evoke more just and democratic schools. As cultural border crossers, teachers have become engaged in "experiences where they are clearly cognizant of issues of subordination and unequal power relations across cultures" (p. 55). Regretfully, most scholars' images of borders

have been more negative than positive. However, Pugh et al. (2000) pointed out, "The border areas between ecosystems are generally the richest biological systems, and likewise human borderlands have the potential to be seen as rich cross-cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical settings" (p. 15). Such metaphorical thinking about the wealth of border diversity permeated the purpose of this study and framed the context for the research practice.

A promising line from borderlands consciousness to this research. I must ask again what a border pedagogy might mean for those of us who attend or teach in a Black university. In my mind, borderland consciousness acknowledges that candidates of Color bring cultural and experiential knowledge, which should be treated as a resource and valued as a way to provide high-quality instruction and to support academic achievement. For some, the image of borders implies powerlessness or displacement, but in my mind, I see the teacher preparation program at STU as a rich cross-cultural educational setting for transformation and emancipation (Giroux, 1992). Bartolome (1996) described it as "a humanizing pedagogy that values the students' background knowledge, culture, and life experiences, and creates learning contexts where power is shared by students and teachers" (p. 248). The fact of power cannot be ignored or negated. Yet, we "can engage with our students as persons to affirm our own incompleteness, our consciousness of spaces to be explored" (Greene, 1996).

Relevance of Theoretical Perspectives to Study

A critical perspective involves the ability of the scholar to criticize the ideological frames that he or she uses to see the world (Pinar et al., 2000). To criticize and polish my own critical lens, I have unpacked the theoretical perspectives of CRT, critical pedagogy,

and borderlands consciousness through contrasts and comparisons, which is a key element within CRT (Tate, 1999). Each discourse contains elements of the others, but each perspective also dictates, for example, the directions research and pedagogical practices should follow, what constitutes legitimate knowledge, and who is a legitimate speaker for the field (Pinar et al., 2000).

Within all three theoretical perspectives, the scholars exposed the failures of White researchers (Anzaldua, 1999; Elenes, 2003; King, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Tate, 1999). Partially, these failures stemmed from the White researcher's lack of ideological clarity and failure to establish her or his relationship to the study (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Tate). To address these fractures and fissures, throughout this literature review and study, I have continued to delineate ideologies that illuminate my role as teacher/researcher and to further contextualize this investigation within relevant historical, institutional, and societal contexts. I believe the borders—the learning spaces at STU—are the sites of resistance and nourishment in which the teacher candidates and I can see, imagine, and create new worlds (hooks, 1984). Therefore, we must "work against the grain in order to forge a genuinely counter-hegemonic praxis in our work" (McLaren, 1999, p. 169).

By using CRT, critical pedagogy, and borderlands consciousness frameworks, I have sought to find the connections, not wanting to employ one research practice at the expense of the others (Hidalgo, 1999). Important for this study, ultimately, is how the facets of these three theoretical underpinnings work together. CRT, critical pedagogy, and borderlands consciousness draw from multiple perspectives and can be supported through multiple methodologies, of which student narratives, dialectical discussions,

storytelling, and the researcher's self-interrogation were most appropriate for this particular study. To support success for teacher candidates of Color, scholars within all three theoretical positions have advocated examining not only the individuals' identities and perspectives, but also—taking into consideration the context—the structural policies, ideologies, habits, and traditions of the institution where the individuals reside. Exploring CRT, critical pedagogy, and borderlands consciousness revealed that criticalists promote a praxis of relating and living together, such as is reflected in Villenas et al.'s (1999) term, a *pedagogy of convivencia*. Moreover, "qualitative research, and critical ethnography in particular, creates an opportunity for academicians and common people alike to put forth the stories of people, cultures, and communities" (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2002, p. 283).

Throughout this review of critical perspectives, two ideas garnered meaning and force: pedagogy of place and empowering pedagogy. The concept of place consumes both geographic and psychological terrains and questions how a place dignifies or desecrates identities. An empowering pedagogy starts with an acceptance of difference, along with the development of community, and a readiness of students and teachers as partners to deal with each situation on its own terms, lessening the "dehumanization of bureaucracies" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 257).

What this suggests is that dynamic and reciprocal relationships can evolve as preservice teachers' identities are dignified through context and practice. The notion of difference is central to each theoretical perspective, because difference grows out of the unequal power relations in this society. Difference is the consequence of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and the likes of other prejudices. At STU, the Mexican American

teacher candidates' experiences of multiple subjectivities and traversals between diverse cultures invariably create a new third space. Thinking about this space addresses the notion of difference—not merely as an acknowledgement of shifting borders, but as a common struggle to extend the quality of public life (Giroux, 1992). Within the context of difference, it is significant to reveal asymmetrical positions of power (Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992, 1996, 2003; McLaren, 1990, 2003). Concurrently, "it needs to be remembered that power is both a constraining force as well as an enabling force" (Giroux, 2003, p. 53).

One problem or void in the literature is the relative neglect of contemporary research and scholarship in linking the education and preparation of teacher candidates at HBCUs to the greater academe. A corollary to this problem is the limited acknowledgement by HBCUs that Latino/as are viable members of their student populations; thus, I contend these institutions have little understanding of the linguistic and cultural resources they possess. By employing the frameworks of CRT, critical pedagogy, and borderlands consciousness, this study was intended to reveal findings beyond knowledge available in the literature.

Diversity Ideologies

Colorblind, Race Neutral, Assimilation, and Pluralism

Relevant to the study of teacher candidates' perceptions is the type of ideologies about race and ethnicity that is valued by leaders within the educational setting and societal context. *Ideology* refers to the "formation of the consciousness of individuals in a

society, particularly their consciousness about how society works" (Apple, 1979, as cited in Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004, p. 242).

> There's an old saying that you never really know your own language until you learn another. It's the same with race. In fact, race is nothing more than a language, a set of stories we tell ourselves to get through the world, to organize our reality. (Conley, 2001, p. 25)

Here, it is important to establish the notion that ideology exists at the "deep, embedded psychological structures of the personality" (Darder et al., 2003, p. 13). Ideology as a conceptual tool connects meanings with structure of power and with individuals.

> For me, choice is central to this difference between race and ethnicity. Within certain (racial) constraints an individual can choose her ethnicity. The constraint that limits "ethnic options" is inequality. When one group enjoys a status advantage over another, it is in their interest to restrict membership, and the affiliational quality disappears—ethnicity becomes racialized.…In other words, I decide my ethnicity, but you decide my race. (Conley, 2001, p. 37)

Ideology as a tool of analysis helps to locate the structuring principles that "mediate between the dominant society and the everyday experiences of teachers and students" (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004, p. 243). For example, it is helpful in examining why some ideologies prevail, whose interests they serve, and whose points of view are displaced.

> In fact, ethnicity is a luxury enjoyed only by certain groups of people. Many African Americans I knew growing up spoke of no national ancestry the way white kids talked about being Irish or German. They had race but not ethnicity (Conley, 2001, p. 38).

As a pedagogical tool, ideology can be used to investigate the contradictions that exist between the mainstream culture of the school and the lived experiences and perceptions that students use to shape and make meaning of school life. "Ideology can best be understood as the framework of thought that is used in society to give order and meaning to the social and political world in which we live" (Darder et al., 2003, p. 13).

To reiterate a point, the landscape influences its ideologies, and, in turn, ideologies influence the landscape (Frankenberg, 1993; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). The intent here is to explore various viewpoints that honor or refute "race differences" as shared by individuals and practiced within institutions. Frankenberg (1993) commented, "The very use of the term 'race' raises the idea of difference, for race is above all a marker of difference, an axis of differentiation" (p. 138). This discussion, therefore, identifies race perspectives and ideologies prevalent in many schools, among many teachers, and particularly significant for studying the ethos at HBCUs, including STU.

The ideological positions and commitments of teachers, whether unconscious or conscious, influence how they respond to diversity and various students in the classrooms. Beyond overt discriminatory institutional and individual practices, many teachers have perhaps a well-meaning but mistaken view that a colorblind or race-neutral and power-evasive policy is the best approach to achieve education fairness (Bennett, 2004; Collins, 2000; Frankenberg, 1993; Schofield, 2004). This colorblind approach claims that to discuss racial differences is to be racist. Widely endorsed as the desirable perspective in schools, institutions, and the judicial system, the colorblind position negates differences as benign or unmentionable. Such "tolerance" can be problematic. Tolerance, coupled with the belief that racism does not affect White students, often encourages an ethnocentric understanding of difference (Collins, 2000). The colorblind consciousness stance of the civil rights movement represented a Eurocentric-oriented, assimilationist racial consciousness. This position, West (1993, as cited in Haymes, 2003) argued,

> sets out to show that black people were really like white people—thereby eliding differences (in history, culture) between blacks and whites. Black specificity and

> particularity were thus banished in order to gain white acceptance and approval. (p. 227)

Menchaca (2001) contended that for very different reasons both neoconservatives and far-right political activists argue that the United States should adopt a colorblind policy. She explained that neoconservatives insist that race does not matter any longer, that affirmative action constitutes reverse discrimination, and that the federal government should not be involved in hiring practices or school desegregation policies. Additionally, neoconservatives promote the view that "economic disparities between Whites and racial minorities are a result of the failure of racial minorities to value education and hard work" (Menchaca, p. 295). In contrast, the far-right activists claim the colorblind view while actually masking their belief that the "root of all economic problems in the United States is because minorities are culturally and biologically inferior" (Menchaca, p. 296). They further believe that people of Color, when mixed socially with Whites, "contribute to the biological degeneration of the White race" (Menchaca, p. 296).

As Schofield (2004) explained, at first the colorblind perspective appears to deemphasize race, but actually it leads to a misrepresentation of reality in ways that encourage discrimination against minority group members or leads to resegregation. Furthermore, this perspective makes it convenient for schools to use curricular materials that inadequately reflect or greatly misrepresent conflicts, contributions, or viewpoints of minority group members. A final disadvantage is that it leads to color-muteness, which is the reluctance of teachers or administrator to discuss race. Such muteness or resistance impedes progress toward constructive resolution of problems among diverse student populations (Schofield). Nonetheless, a race-awareness perspective does not imply that it is desirable to remind students constantly of their group membership or continually to

emphasize group differences. According to Schofield, the best course of action is "to encourage students to deal with each other as individuals" while attention is paid to how various groups fare "in setting policies and making decisions" (p. 807).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogies

One criterion for teaching students of subordinate groups and ethnic minority students requires that teachers discard their deficit notions and genuinely utilize students' knowledge bases and strengths in their teaching (Delpit, 1995; Freire, 1968; Gay, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1998, 2001; Moll & Gonzales, 2004; Nieto, 2001; Valencia, 1997). Critical teacher strategies that are academically rigorous can contribute to discarding deficit views of students from subordinated groups, so that the students are regarded with respect and viewed as capable and active in their own learning (Bartolome, 1996). The practice of valuing, learning from, and capitalizing on student life experiences and language often occurs in classrooms where students possess cultural capital more closely matching that of the culturally dominant teachers (Bowl, 2003; Lubienski, 2003; McLaren, 2003). Anyon's (1997) classic research, however, suggested that teachers of affluent students are more likely than teachers of working-class students to utilize and incorporate student life experiences and knowledge into the curriculum. Anyon and others (Bartolome, 1996; Knapp & Woolverton, 2004) have found that teachers of working-class students considered them lacking the necessary cultural capital and therefore imposed behavioral standards and content limitations, with little respect for student input. Such information is crucial for preservice teachers to use not only to assess their own attitudes toward teaching ethnic minority students but also to prepare

instructional approaches and activities that value student experience and student voice (Elenes, 2003; Pinar et al., 2000).

Valenzuela (1999, 2005) emphasized that education must be additive; that is, new concepts and skills must be added to the students' existing knowledge and repertoire of skills. Delpit (1995) recommended that teachers strategically teach the "codes of power" to enable students of subordinated groups to "code switch" according to the political and sociocultural circumstances. Numerous scholars have endorsed the strengths approaches, often referred to as culturally responsive instruction, culturally congruent teaching, or culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1998, 2001; Nieto, 2001).

Taking an alternative stance, Lubienski (2003) contended that recent shifts in education, which now frame diversity as positive, divert attention from socioeconomic disparities and obscure larger, structural inequities. She agreed that teachers should build on favorable assets of differing ethnic and language traditions. However, she found that focusing solely on strengths avoids problems that many underserved students and their teachers face daily. Moreover, education research seems focused on achievement outcomes of students from subordinated groups as opposed to the complex processes contributing to those outcomes, such as highly segregated schools and schools in working-class neighborhoods with limited resources and less credentialed teachers. "Education research is becoming removed from, and alienating to, those populations it seeks to serve" (Lubienski, p. 30). Lubienski drew on her own working-class economic and educational background and her research investigating how mathematics achievement opens doors to the middle class. She illuminated class-related problems like malnutrition, domestic violence, parental substance abuse, and childhood trauma, which,

despite occurring in all social classes, occur more often among low-SES families. Lubienski focused on social class differences in orientations toward knowledge, creativity, autonomy, and intellectual work. She called on educators to recognize that approaches that solely "celebrate" students' positive assets actually ignore social class cultural inequalities to the detriment of those students we intend to help.

Bartolome (1996) recommended that teachers act as "cultural mentors" when familiarizing students with school codes and social skills. Prevalent in the literature are stories about working-class educators and educators of Color who confronted numerous barriers, but through self-determination, they climbed the academic and economic ladders. For some, a mentor teacher was their guide (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Lubienski, 2003). On the other hand, in the literature are also stories of "well-meaning" teachers who are criticized for imposing White middle-class customs on working-class students (Finn, 1999; Knapp & Woolverton, 2004; McLaren, 2003).

An edict—such as teachers should become "cultural mentors" to address students' socioeconomic disparities and differences in educational background—treads on highly politicized ground. "There is a national discomfort with acknowledging the existence of classes and our own privilege" (Lubienski, 2003, p. 32). This politicized terrain is no less controversial for educators in higher education or administrators at economically "endangered institutions" (June, 2003). Whether the working-class student attends an elementary school or a first-tier—or third-tier—university, the consequences of poverty and poverty-related disparities can be overwhelming for the student and for the student's teachers. The consequences of class disparities are seen not only in emotional and academic problems but also in social relations (Bowl, 2003; Finn, 1999; Ginwright, 2004;

Gloria & Castellanos, 2003; Hernandez & Jacobs, 2004). From the vast literature, one quickly surmises that teachers play a significant role in creating humanizing contexts to enable students to acquire empowering literacy.

Teacher Education Program Ideologies

Although Ladson-Billings (2001) did not directly address HBCUs, she argued that the norms and folkways of teacher education hold White as normative and occlude abilities to institute real change for racial justice. The "problem of diversity" in teacher preparation historically has been constructed from a deficit perspective about the education of minority students, particularly African Americans. In the face of rapid social and cultural change, college and university seem to be moving in two directions:

> To conform to the demands of state and national external reviews, some programs of teacher preparation are developing standards-based programs that at least nominally address diversity. At the same time, more graduate programs include opportunities for advanced work in multicultural education, multiculturalism, and cultural studies. (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 62)

Giroux (1992), Ladson-Billings (2004, 2005), and Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) have suggested that a CRT perspective can interrupt the deficit perspectives, which underlie most teacher education programs.

Most certainly, there is a dearth of information about contemporary teacher preparation programs at HBCUs, with the exception of accountability statistics collected by state licensure offices that generally cast a dim view about these programs. In Texas, teacher training programs are measured by the state based only on the passing rates of graduates taking certification examinations. Stemming from the persistent, high-stakes testing demands, problems manifest both for graduates who do not immediately pass and for the related program. For years to no avail, state educator organizations (such as the

Texas Directors of Field Experiences) have negotiated for adoption of other measures, such as candidate portfolios or the collection of data to show the number of graduates hired and retained in public school teaching positions. Admittedly, these measures are not considered cost effective by the state legislature, but these types of accountability, particularly the impressively long retention rates of African Americans teachers in public schools, would shed a whole different and more positive light on HBCU teacher education programs. This is just one example in which the political system reinscribes policies that enhance the status of White teachers and PWIs to the detriment of the Others.

Critical race theorists claim that the assessment game is merely a validation of the dominant culture's superiority and will toward homogenization. "The entire history of standardized testing has been one of exclusion and social ranking rather than diagnosis and school improvement" (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 60). Steele's (2004) work with college students on *stereotype threat* suggested that the academic performance of racial and ethnic minorities is indeed impaired by negative stereotypes about their competency on standardized tests and in school settings (C. D. Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004). The data show that students who are the most skilled, confident, and motivated are most impaired by negative stereotypes about their abilities (Steele). Unfortunately, I have witnessed how stereotype threat conditions a negative self-image among numerous STU preservice teachers—African Americans, Mexican Americans, international students, and White students with a history of low test scores—especially with regards to the certification examinations. Sleeter and Delgado-Bernal (2004) and Valenzuela (1999)

argued that the meritocracy of American schooling subtly reinforces the idea that failure for certain individuals or groups is normal.

Identity Orientations and Multiple Identities

The notion of a pristine identity must fall by the wayside; identities are fluid and "always already hybrid" (West, 1991, as cited in McKenna, 2004). Identities are constructed at the interstices of multiple axes, such as class, ethnicity, race, gender, age, generation, sexual orientation, geopolitical locale, institutional affiliation, and social status, whereby each aspect of identity redefines and modifies all others. Identity options are constructed, validated, and offered through discourses available to individuals at a particular point in time and place. Furthermore, individuals often shift and adjust ways in which they position themselves in distinct contexts (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

Understandably, each college student represents a range of identities created through psychic, societal, racial, age, ability, and cultural constraints. Therefore, we must ask and explore: To what extent does compliance with the rituals and expectations of school mean that students have to forfeit their identity as members of an ethnic group (McLaren, 2003)? To what extent is the fear of the Other cultivated by teacher education programs (Ladson-Billings, 2005)? To what extent is the range of identities legitimized within a system of education designed to regulate character and dictate values? Although not exhaustive, this section of the literature review filters through numerous theories about ramifications of various identities as exhibited in educational settings—identities involving psychic turmoil, racial and ethnic origin, immigrant and subordinate class status, and adult learners as well as first-generation college students.

Double Consciousness, Mestiza Consciousness, and Stereotype Threat

Prevalent in educational literature is the theme of inner turmoil, where one struggles between being true to one's cultural self and being the cultural body that others expect. Whereas some scholars refer to this conundrum as *double-consciousness* or the *splitting-of-self*, other scholars use the terms *hyphenated-self* or *border crossers* to recognize a person's dual ethnicities or dual nationalities (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). The main difference in terminology, perhaps, is the degree to which one's identity is severed: *Double consciousness* involves dualistic thinking about binary oppressions, but *mestiza consciousness* traverses three regions, positioning one's thoughts in the past homeland (Mexico), new country (United States), and territory between the countries (borderlands). In a society structured by the "color line," race, class, language, and culture are significant forces shaping the lives of students and their families:

> American cultural identity continues to be formed not only along the boundaries of the "color line"—that enduring problem of the 20th century that W.E.B. Dubois predicted in 1903—but also within cultural demarcations that denote and connote degrees of assimilation to an idealized White-Euro-American middle-class norm. (Cruze, 1987, as cited in King, 2004, p. 350)

Confessions of uncertainty and discomfort over one's belonging to a certain group speak directly to the questions of culture and identity and reveal "the utter failure of multiculturalism within the United States to effectively come to grips with the ever-changing face of America" (McCarthy, Giardina, Harewood, & Park, 2005, p. 153).

Inner conflict is the voice of consciousness. Language is the key tool for the development of consciousness and voice. One knows one's self, experiences, and interpretations of the world through language. Yet, it is difficult for some critical theorists to believe that students of multicultural education genuinely can celebrate a subordinated ethnic group's values when channeled through the dominant English language that

devalues, in many ways, the very differences of the cultural group being studied (Macedo & Bartolome, 1999, as cited in Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). "Because consciousness is shaped through language, language can serve as a means of control or as well as a means of liberation" (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, p. 244). Using her own native language to work against oppression, Anzaldua (1987, 2002) has shown that language carries culture.

Ladson-Billings (1994, 2004, 2005) and others (Freeman, 2005; Grant, 1999; S. Willie, 2003) have used W. E. B. DuBois's powerful notion of double consciousness (borrowed from Sigmund Freud) as an appropriate rubric for understanding the identity challenge of all people who suffer the oppression of dominant culture norms and constraints. DuBois (1905/1994) articulated this challenge of double consciousness as seeing one's self through the eyes of the others while evaluating one's self by the critique of a world that looks on in amused pity and contempt. Bhabha (2005) expanded dual-consciousness within the Black man's struggle against White domination: "To destroy the binary structure of power and identity…the Black man must be Black; he must be Black in relation to the White man—rejecting the framing of the White man as universal, normative" (Bhabha, 2005, p. 14).

Similar to W.E. B. DuBois, Anzaldua designated mestiza consciousness to reveal the psychic-restlessness within her and other Latinas' bicultural identity: "Because I, a mestiza, continually walk out of one culture and into another, because I am in all cultures at the same time" (Anzaldua, 1999, p. 99). Anzaldua developed the term *border crossers* and the discourse of the borderlands to better reveal the anguished relations between past and present oppressions (Elenes, 2003). Anzaldua (1999) explained,

> Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, *la mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates. Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes *un choque,* a cultural collision. (p. 100)

In Anzaldua's theorizing about mestiza consciousness, "the only way to survive the borderlands is to acknowledge the multiplicity of difference and to acquire a tolerance for ambiguity" (McKenna, 2003, p. 435). The consciousness of one's vortex of difference is the key to healing.

At school, immigrant youths must either contend with the fact that they are culturally and ethnically the Other, or they must try to act White as "a kind of self-protection and insurance for slipping into school networks" (Heath, 2004, p. 151). Ogbu (2003), hooks (1989, 1992, 1995, 2003b), and Suarez-Orozco et al.(2004) cautioned about the psychic burdens assumed by students of Color. Within this state of mind, a person of Color suffers anxiety over feelings of a self-betrayal and a language betrayal or race portrayal.

> Black folks striving to succeed may feel bombarded and conflicted when expectations from black peers and family differ from those of the predominantly white world they work in. These individuals may construct a false self to get ahead in both these worlds. This produces inner conflict which undermines self-esteem. (hooks, 2001, p. 87)

The time is now, decreed hooks (2001), for people to claim the right of multiple identities and the right to refuse to mask one's self to please others. Those individuals who continue to don a false self will discover that their mental and physical health will suffer as a result.

This connection between mental turmoil and physical ailments was further substantiated by Suarez-Orozco et al. (2004). Their research indicated that immigrant

youth are socialized quickly, but too often tragically, into America's racial and class regime. Far too many Latino youth find it difficult to develop a flexible and adaptive sense of identity in U.S. schools. Consequently, "Americanization (of one's identity) now appears to lead to dystopic adaptations" (e.g., obesity, diabetes, drug abuse, lower grades)—all coping mechanisms in the "crafting and performing of hyphenated identities" (Suarez-Orozco et al., p. 427). Even if parents, teachers, or caregivers give positive feedback, they may not provide enough to compensate for the intensity of distortions inflicted by the "house of mirrors" that subordinated students and people of Color encounter in their everyday lives (Suarez-Orozco et al., p. 429).

In *Subtractive Schooling* (1999), Valenzuela cited examples of culturally diverse students who must make the involuntary choice, which is thrust upon them by schooling polices and practices, to act Mexican or American. Students must choose between home loyalties and fitting in at school, between Spanish and English, between traditional mores and stereotyped U.S. school behaviors. Far from affirming students' worth as cultural Mexican beings, U.S. schooling practices subtract from their identity and esteem. "Students are objectified by a double standard that calls on them to make sense of schooling when schooling is not attempting to make sense of them" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 258).

Steele (2004) affirmed this concept of stereotype threat as an explanatory tool for understanding achievement gaps among college students. Stereotype threat, as defined by Steele, is the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that inadvertently would confirm that stereotype. Using compelling data from research with college students of the same ability, Steele showed that negative

stereotypes about intellect affect academic performance. One key asset of Steele's contribution is that he carefully separated race and class, defeating the notion that upper class or middle-class students who are African American do not suffer from educational and social contexts that infuse negative thoughts about the intellectual ability of Blacks (C. D. Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004; Steele).

Scholars (Grant, 1999; hooks, 2000; King, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Villenas, 1996) have recognized the double-consciousness turmoil not only within the subordinated student but also within the teacher of Color and the researcher of Color. Ladson-Billings (1994, 2004, 2005) has explored the conundrum of having "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings" (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 41). She explained, "There's a cost" for having a "collective consciousness" as a Black professor, functioning in a prestigious university that typically fosters and rewards individualism on the basis of a White-patriarchal criterion (p. 41). Grant noted that teachers of Color, educated under the same White-privileged system, are trapped within the dual consciousness of racism and classism. Grant reported that teachers of Color agonize over the hypocrisy in many school "policies and procedures offered to combat racism and to help poor children [that] are simply the rhetoric of the dominant class" (p. 161). Villenas (1996, 2000), in her position as a Chicana ethnographer with Latina mothers in a rural community, confronted her anguish of being caught in the oppressive discourses of Othering. By unearthing the blurred boundaries between Other and self, Villenas demonstrated how the Other is simultaneously judged against the latter. As she became involved in this discourse, she found herself complicit in the manipulation of her identities and in her own marginalization and colonization. Villenas (2000), therefore, called upon ethnographers

from marginalized cultures to realize their position as border crossers, and in doing so, to hold themselves accountable to their community and to their self-representation.

Anzaldua (1999) warned that we should not lock ourselves into thinking either of the "oppressor or oppressed…like the cop and criminal …stand[ing] on the opposite river bank shouting questions" (p. 100). Instead of damaging self or Other, Anzaldua beckoned us to synthesize the elements of consciousness. She advocated that the "synthesized being" can be "greater than the sum of the severed parts…and its energy comes from continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm" (Anzaldua, 1999, p. 102). "A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war" (Anzaldua, 1999, p. 102). The notion of navigating dual or multiple mental worlds that are complex, nested, and overlapping is very "real" for educators of Color, and each world "has its own set of challenges" (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p.18).

Helping to shed light on the complexities of multiple mental worlds, Freire (1968) introduced *conscientization,* which is an educational strategy that focuses on the development of critical social consciousness. Within the practice of critical pedagogy, conscientization is the process by which "empowered subjects achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities that shape their lives and discover their own capacities to re-create them" (Darder et al., 2003, p. 15). Hence, the actual lived experience cannot be ignored in the process of coming to know. Lived experiences, the various interpretations, and their contexts must be explored in order to understand how they might be different.

How did increased understandings about double consciousness, mestiza consciousness, stereotype threat, and conscientization influence the study of Mexican American/Hispanic teacher candidates at a HBCU? Indeed, respectful consideration is essential for nourishing the integrity of bicultural and multicultural identities. This would entail providing safe opportunities for participants to voice and explore their conscious and subconscious identities and possibly related issues of concern. It would require a stance as a careful listener to determine whether participants feel obliged to vacillate between the self and the masked Other while pursuing their education at a HBCU. It would be important to ascertain how teacher candidates manipulate their multiple identities to survive and thrive.

On a personal basis, as their White professor, I often have noticed that preservice teachers code switch their language styles during conversations with peers and dialogue with me. With these added insights about double and mestiza consciousness, I could be more cognizant to try not to impose my Whiteness. I want my actions and words to validate the cultural and ethnic identities of my students. For these reasons, Foley's (2002) words are important to me: "Knowing the lived reality of others can only happen by being highly reflexive (i.e., by engaging in a long, disciplined, systematic process of experiencing, recording, and critically reflecting on reality) (p. 147).

In this vein, the broader scope of this study must help tear down binary constructs of Brown/Black, Black/White, and they/us in the context of classrooms and the greater society to energize the potential of students learning together and from one another (Valdivia, 2005). "Making it within a racist society often required and at times still requires both accommodation and assimilation" (hooks, 2001, p. 23). Our work as

teachers must involve understanding the advantages and disadvantages of accommodation and assimilation. We also must work to decrease the agonies and bewilderment of student border crossers to assure that we dignify their identities and their socialization process in school. Through discussions within the STU teacher preparation program, candidates can increase their awareness about the damaging effects of subverting students' double consciousness or sabotaging students' mestiza consciousness. Anzaldua (1999) said it best: "A misinformed people is a subjugated people.…Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads" (pp. 108-109). We must come to view identities as contextual and contingent upon a variety of circumstances throughout one's lifespan (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). We must assist persons of Color to transition from anguish about having multiple origins and identities to feelings of vitality and pride.

Constructions of Identities

The politics of identity (as well as the "who" and "what" topics of curriculum) form a complex mediation and reconstruction of experiences built upon privilege, exclusion, or marginalization (Pinar et al., 2000). The unearthing of issues regarding identity-marginalization is key to both understanding the relations of domination and subordination, historically and currently, and to unraveling oppressive discourses of "Othering" (Pinar et al., 2000). However, Ellsworth (1999) argued that the search for a "coherent narrative about othering is counterproductive," and what is needed is "persistent critique," moving about constituting subjects in shifting, multiple, and contradictory sites while refusing to accept any one story (p. 113).

Research in identity formation and ongoing active reconstructions (Menchaca, 2001; Olneck, 2004) reveals that multiple life experiences as well as socio-cultural-political factors have an impact on one's racial and ethnic choices and identity characteristics. Racial and ethnic identities vary a great deal; identity is never static but fluid and contingent upon a variety of circumstances throughout a lifespan (Banks, 2003; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). Some people have multiple ethnic group attachments; a particular identity is not necessarily correlated with self-esteem, and an individual's perception of self is not always correlated with how the person is perceived (Root, 2004). Ethnic identities are not inheritances or preservations; rather, they emerge from interactions among groups within sociopolitical and institutional contexts (Olneck, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999).

Within American schools, youths become ethnic as they develop images of themselves and of their place on society's map. Subsequently, how individuals identify themselves might be at odds with how they are viewed by outside groups or responded to by institutions (Banks, 2001). Moreover, each successive generation has its own identity options, which are distinct from those of earlier generations. The "school itself is salient in the refashioning of identity" as is the world of extracurricular activities, and the nature of those differences vary from school to school, depending on patterns of ethnic composition and social class (Olneck, 2004, p. 391). Social imminence or distance is induced by a school's sorting mechanisms and classroom management practices, by the treatment received from teachers and students, and by a need to make conscious cultural choices (Valenzuela, 1999). In some cases, immigrants express a pejorative view of becoming Americanized (Centrie, 2000, as cited in Olneck, 2004, p. 393).

> Any understanding of Latino youth growing up in a diaspora must take into account consideration of identity. How they come to define themselves, as well as how others define them, has important implications for where they live, with whom they live, where they work, and how they envision their future and mobilize toward that realization. (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004, p. 417)

Racism, Race, and Ethnicity

Relevant to the research question and for the preparation of teachers is a brief discussion of racism, race, and ethnicity. "Teachers must understand their own racial identity to support positive development of their students' racial and ethnic identities. They must also engage in racial dialogue among themselves to facilitate student conversation" (Tatum, 2000, p. 54).

Race is a complex, dynamic, and changing social construct, "not a biological given" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 316). The construct—race—has been used as a category of analysis to interpret the social conditions of inequality and marginalization (Darder & Torres, 2003). Critical race theorists believe that race as an analytical tool, rather than as a biologically or socially constructed category, "can deepen the analysis of educational barriers for people of color, as well as illuminate how they resist and overcome these barriers" (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004, p. 246). Given this legacy, the effort must be made to understand "race as an unstable and decentered complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle" (Omni & Winant, 1995, p. 19).

The term *racism* is used in a range of different ways, for the most part in the sense of hurtful "interpersonal interactions but also in the sense of differential access to power" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 185). Rather than being something external to the individual (who is subjected to racism), racism is a socially constructed force that he or she comes to internalize. Rains (2000) went further, explaining that racism is often taught with an

emphasis on the negative outcomes. Racism is not only about its disadvantages to people of Color, but "also about the benefits to be gained from maintaining a system of inequalities" (Rains, p. 82). Racism has formative power in that it not only guides the way people think about themselves, but also comes to shape and influence their actions, behaviors, and individual and collective identities, which often change over time and from one context to the next.

Scheurich (1993) described the various kinds of racism: individual (covert and overt), institutional, societal, civilizational, and epistemological. According to Scheurich (1993), institutional racism exists when "organizational cultures, rules, habits, or symbols have the same biasing effect, favoring the majority race" (p. 135). Moreover, the "chorus of scholars of color" has contended that the "dominant group epistemologies and methodologies tend to distort the lives of other racial groups" (Scheurich, 1993, p. 142). Racism is evidenced when textbooks and teachers mostly disregard indigenous people (Nieto, 1996, 2002, 2004). Another explanation is that racism is the act of ignoring and the act of assimilating a person's racial or ethnic differences into the majority group's mores (Frankenberg, 1993). Reyes and Halcon (1988) noted that racism experienced by Chicano/as in academia is not new, and in fact, they coined the phrase *academic colonialism* to denote racism experienced by Chicano/a scholars.

Ladson-Billings (2005) expressed high regard for Joyce King's concept of *dysconscious racism*, a term coined by King to describe an uncritical habit of mind that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given. Dysconsciousness involves assumptions and attitudes of distorted awareness about racism as is exhibited by many preservice teachers (and White people) (King, 2004).

Since most preservice teachers cannot imagine a future different from what they see, they are unable to break the oppression and hierarchy embedded in most educational settings. According to King (2004), preservice teachers fail to reflect critically on social inequities and, thus, cannot challenge the status quo. Furthermore, King and others (e.g., Nieto, Gay, Banks, and Ladson-Billings) have argued that most teacher candidates lack the readiness and understandings needed to implement antiracist education and multicultural materials.

From my long history as a teacher educator, I agree that many teacher candidates lack the readiness and understanding to implement antiracist education. The fault is not with the students but, instead, is the lack of emphasis within teacher education programs. However, I find Ladson-Billings' (2005) agreement with King's appraisal of dysconscious racism among preservice teachers stems from their work with mostly White students at different primarily White institutions (University of Wisconsin-Madison and Stanford University). Although my teacher candidates at STU may or may not have a clear picture of how society could be different, all of them have a conscious awareness of racism. This point of departure is just one juncture in the literature where the voice of teacher candidates of Color at HBCUs remains faint or silenced.

Relevant to any conversation about participants' perceptions and negotiations of racism is the question, "Who has the power?" Some critical and postmodern educators have defined racism as "prejudice plus power" (Omni, 2001). By employing this formula, they correspondingly have argued that "people of Color cannot be racist since they lack power. But it is not that simple or straightforward" (Omni, p. 287), especially within a HBCU where the power-holders are African Americans.

Though interrelated, race should not be confused with ethnicity or culture. For example, racial identification does not serve as a unifying force for Latino social identification. Many Latinos do not identify themselves racially, but rather have a nationalistic sense of identity; they have nonetheless "been socially defined within the racial hierarchy" (Hidalgo, 1999, p. 104). A racially stratified society "limits opportunity structures based on a group's location within the racial hierarchy" (Hidalgo, p. 106). The concept of race that assumes that "human groups can be divided on the basis of their biological and physical characteristics" is a highly contested claim (Banks, 2001, p.162). Scholars have argued against considering any cultural or ethnic group as a monolithic racial entity and have recommended instead highlighting within-group differences and similarities (Gutierrez, 2004). Highlighting Bhabha (1994), Cary (2001) explained that the relativistic discourse of diversity reinscribes its hegemonic discourse—a White solution to the Black problem. Rather than diversity, Cary and others have advocated the need to focus upon difference as a positive dimension. Despite this good advice, among educators deep tensions pervade between the emphasis on equality and the emphasis on difference, because of the complex and multiple identities people assume (Ladson-Billings, 2004).

Ethnic identity refers to the degree to which a person feels connected with a racial, national, or cultural group (Bennett, 2004). In the literature, *culture* is defined in many ways, but basically it refers to "the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior" (C. D. Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004, p. 472). Regrettably, "teachers commonly conflate ethnicity and culture, seeing them as synonymous" (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004, p. 242). The simplistic notions of

identity, culture, and community are too narrowly read as the final property of particular ethnic groups. Thus, multiculturalism is portrayed as Otherness in a way that makes invisible Whiteness, power, and racial struggle. What conceptions of culture get left out? Often disregarded, for example, are mixed ethnic identities, which defy superficial definitions of culture.

Although *culture* and *ethnicity* are distinguishable, a number of studies have demonstrated a link between racial and ethnic identity pathways (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). These studies suggest people may choose a variety of identity types, but those persons who forge *bicultural identities* are more successful academically. Some people who choose to adopt an *ethnic light identity* embrace their cultural traditions but reject their culture's language. Others prefer a *co-ethnic focus*. Still, the most adaptive ethnic identity type involves forging a *transcultural sense of self* (Suarez-Orozco et al.).

"Although ethnicity is a significant part of American life, there is a national American culture and identity" that continues to result from a series of multiple acculturations, and it is shared by most groups in the United States (Banks, 2003, p. 9). Critical researchers have argued that culture has to be viewed as an ethos of struggle and always a contested process (Pinar et al., 2000).

Ladson-Billings (2004) raised important questions about the complexities of identities that do not fit into fixed categories of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. Unfortunately, the complexities of identities make some explanations offered by multicultural education and cultural studies "too diffuse and rhetorical to be meaningful in everyday lives, especially in pre-K–12 classrooms" (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 61). Furthermore, the demographic shifts and multiple identities that people inhabit and share

are positioning "culture to trump nationality" (p.61). Instead of allegiances to one's country, the world is becoming divided along collective ethnic groups or "civilizational allegiances" (p. 61). For example, numerous Spanish speakers, regardless of their geographic residence, demonstrate a strong affinity to each other in relation to other groups, or Muslims worldwide cohere in opposition to Jews or Christians" (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 62). Ladson-Billings (2004) reminded us to avoid the single-explanation trap, because other forms of oppression (economics and politics) make ethnoracial distinctions a limited way to talk about multiculturalism. In K–12 classrooms,

> teachers will have to work back and forth between individual and group identities, while at the same moment taking principled stands on behalf of students who, because of some perceived difference or sense of otherness, are left behind. The new work of multicultural education must be more generative. (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 63)

Of course, cultural and ethnic studies occupy an ever-expanding role in higher education, but rarely do preservice teachers interrogate the role of power and domination of the ruling class (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). Rarely do prospective teachers examine popular culture and its influence of caricatures and stereotypes on youth via video games, computer resources, music, dance, television, and movies. For youth, the distinctions between real and pretend are blurred (Pinar et al., 2000).

Immigrant Minorities, Involuntary Subordinates, and Border Crossers

Often heard is the comment: "My immigrant grandparents made it; why can't the Others?" When compared to educational histories of Mexican American immigrant students or inner-city students of Color, why do Asian immigrants and recent arrivals from European countries enter public schools not knowing the English language but generally advance from remedial programs to regular and upper tracked classes?

Scholars such as Valenzuela, Delpit, Ogbu, and Steele have contributed greatly to understanding the numerous complexities embraced by *immigrant* minorities as well as *involuntary* minorities. Valdes (1996) and Finn (1999) substantiated Ogbu's (2003) explanations about immigrant and involuntary minorities and their distinguished histories as manifested in school success or school failure. Immigrant minorities are students whose families or caretakers came to America for improved political, social, or economic opportunities. With encouragement from their families, these students are willing to accommodate to school policies and expectations without assimilation. "They don't mind that their culture is not represented in mainstream schools," because they sent their children to learn the mainstream culture of public schools in order to prosper (Finn, p. 41). In contrast, involuntary immigrants—Native Americans, African Americans, and Mexican Americans—are people who have been deemed Americans through conquest, colonization, or slavery and whose ancestors historically have been denied assimilation and relegated to an inferior status. "Involuntary minorities experience discrimination as permanent…and see themselves as oppressed…and do not believe that they will be accepted even if they surrender their identity" (Finn, p. 42, 48). Whereas immigrant minorities strive to be a part of the American culture, often involuntary immigrant students as well as Black adolescents of both working-class and affluent social class origins develop an oppositional identity to resist or disengage from White-dominated education (King 2004; Ogbu, 2003). For these involuntary-subordinated populations, "school is not and will never be their home turf"; consequently, they are unlikely to adopt the characteristics of their enemy (Finn, p. 46).

Establishing a cultural marker in opposition to another (e.g., Spanish vs. English, Ebonics vs. Standard English) creates a border that people cross at their own peril. Moreover, border crossers are not likely to be fully accepted by the dominant group but are likely to be considered traitors by their population of origin (Finn, 1999; Giroux, 1992). Finn, steadfastly positioned in the critical paradigm, faulted "border crossing without any challenge to the status quo," even though he noted that "very few border crossers make it" (p. 188). Giroux (1992) encouraged teachers to become border crossers by listening critically to the voices of their students, by making different narratives available to themselves and to their students, and by legitimizing difference as a basic condition for understanding one's own knowledge and others.

Valdes (1996) and Valenzuela (1999, 2005) explained how language, similar to skin color and appearance, is positioned as either a high-status language (e.g., French, Russian, or Japanese) that is perceived positively or is positioned as a low-status language (Spanish, Tex/Mex, Ebonics) that constitutes a disadvantage in some schools. Furthermore, schools strive to "de-ethnicitize" students to distance them from their communities. Looking deep into barriers created by schools, Valenzuela described how schools make it difficult for constructive ties to emanate between the immigrant and U.S.-born youth. In two major ways schools subtract resources from immigrant youth, whether their family is a first-generation arrival or an established third generation. The first way involves "de-Mexicanization," devaluing students' culture and language, which is consequential to their orientations toward education and achievements. Second, within the educational process, the teachers' practices of de-Mexicanization erode students' social capital by making it difficult for immigrants to form social connections and

friendships with U.S.-born Mexican youth. “Rather than students failing schools, schools fail students” with a pedagogical logic that aggressively pushes assimilation and structurally deprives youth of their social and economic capital (Valenzuela, 1999, 2005). Thus, only a few ascend the academic ladder, while most Mexican American students remain at the bottom strata of society. As bell hooks (2000) contended, “Our nation is fast becoming a place where class matters as much as race and oftentimes more” (p. 8).

Valdes (1996) refuted Ogbu’s (1987) two categories of *immigrant* and *caste minorities*, revealing that simultaneously there are both immigrant and caste minorities within a single population. Valdes claimed, “Although researchers working with Mexican-origin children do not see themselves as working primarily within the deficit/difference paradigm, language issues have come to dominate the debate” (p. 27). Other researchers have recognized the significance of the Spanish language on whether one claims identity class status (McLaren, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas, 1996, 2000).

For the most part, research on the Mexican American–origin student population has focused on low scholastic achievement related to family influences, biliteracy, acculturation, and length of generational residence. Findings strongly suggest that second-generation children gradually lose their achievement drive with increasing acculturation (Gutierrez, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999).

> Generalizations about the Mexican-origin population with regard to educational success or failure are difficult to make because there are important and significant differences (generational, regional, experiential, linguistic) among the various groups that make up the Mexican-origin population. (Valdes, 1996, p. 24)

Adult Learners and First-Generation College Students

As is the case at most colleges and universities, at STU the changing student population reflects an increased number of older students, entering college for the first time or transferring after a history of enrollments at other colleges. The term *first-generation college student* means that the individual is first in his or her immediate family to enroll in college and thus cannot benefit from parents' experiences to navigate the process**.** Without role models, these students approach college with a sense of insecurity about their academic abilities (Bowl, 2003). *Nontraditional or adult learners* refers to persons who, after high school graduation, delayed enrollment in college and/or completion of a degree. They often strive to make a useful connection between their college coursework and their own experiential competence, and they are alert to opportunities to apply what they have learned (Bowl). Beyond these common explanations, Moses, in his 2004 keynote address to the STU faculty, accurately described the first-generation or adult learners of African American or Hispanic origin as less likely to have family financial support and more likely to be rooted in the culture of poverty. Moses further explained that they are "non-traditional in what they've already experienced in their short lives." They already "live outside the box" and are generally "very resourceful at many levels even though their decisions may not always be the best (such as over extending credit cards, juggling two jobs, or signing unrealistic car payments, mortgages, or student loan repayments)."

In contrast to White first-generation college students and White nontraditional adult learners, the needs of the Black and Brown first-generation students or nontraditional adult learners are unique. Research indicates that, more than any other

variable, high involvement in student–faculty interactions, especially outside of class time, has the strongest impact on student retention in college. Consequently, teachers need to interact in meaningful ways with students inside and outside the classrooms (Ellsworth, 1989). Since students are expected to learn middle-class values promoted in the schools, teachers should learn the culture of poverty as well as the strengths such learners bring to the classroom. Teachers and students need to become culturally bilingual (Valenzuela, 1999). Professors "need to be 'outside the box' to put worth in these types of students' education" (Moses, 2004).

Class Implications in Educational Practices

"*Class* refers to the economic, social and political relationships that govern life in a given social order" (McLaren, 2003, p. 74). Does a student's ranking of class matter within democratically based education? Yes!

Critical theorists argue that schools generally affirm and reward the students who exhibit middle-class standards but devalue those students who embody working-class lifestyles and speech patterns. Even well-meaning teachers prioritize class-specific characteristics over intellectual abilities, systematically registering their working-class students as intellectually or socially deficient (Delpit, 1995; hooks, 2000; McLaren, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999). The errors of teachers' ways, however, remain mostly invisible: "Research to date tells us that educators are generally socialized to ignore social class (especially their own), or else to operate from crude stereotypes based on the perceived class of their students" (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004, p. 678).

McLaren (2003) called for a dialectical understanding of schooling that brushes against the canon of mainstream educational theory, which conceives the purpose of

schooling is to provide students with attitudes and skills to become patriotic, responsible citizens. At the same time, McLaren (2003) denounced the "overdeterministic orthodox Marxist view of schooling, which claims that schools simply reproduce class relations and passively indoctrinate students into becoming greedy young capitalists" (p. 70). For critical educators, any worthwhile understanding of schooling involves a critique of how the multiple ideologies and practices are linked to certain race, gender, and class interests.

The intent of this section of the literature review is to heed but move beyond stereotypical images of socially ordered students and to illuminate the dynamics of social-class relations as they pertain to schooling practices for working-class or elite-class students. "Class relationships reflect the constraints and limitations individuals and groups experience in the areas of income level, occupation, place of residence, and other indicators of status and social rank" (McLaren, 2003, p. 74). This investigation responds to the call "to continue trying to connect various forms of oppression and various communities struggling for justice" (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004, p. 254). In making the connections between classism and other "–isms" (race, sex, age, disabilities), the nature of oppressions must be studied as intersections rather than binaries: working class and impoverished versus wealthy; people of Color versus White; and so forth. Although such binaries help define power relations and demarcate conflict and struggle, historically, binaries also have been used as a means of control (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal).

Therefore, this section is organized within a framework of six intersecting class constraints, which operate to impede the progress of working class students: (a) economic, (b) female gender, (c) race, (d) educational, (e) sociocultural, and (f) place.

Impediments to class mobility also cross politics and gender lines as well as religion, sexual orientation, age, and disabilities. Inevitably, political and gender constraints intersect all areas, with no area operating separately and all areas overlapping. This framework is used to explore relations between class constraints and schooling as found in perceptions and experiences of Mexican American teacher candidates at STU. Additionally, within this section of the literature review, attention is focused on the merits and pitfalls of a school model that emphasizes positive aspects but ignores disparities of working-class students. At the end of the section, the information is summarized, highlighting key understandings about relations of class and education.

In most societies, social and economic class stratifications are common across whole communities, organizations, and educational systems. The neighborhoods, subordinate groups, racial and ethnic populations, and organizations are characterized in terms of their perceived social and economic class positions. Often, race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender plays a role in the way others perceive class status. The prestigious African American institutions, namely Howard, Spellman, Morehouse, and Clark Atlanta, are the universities most likely to attract the children of prominent and wealthy African American families. In contrast, other HBCUs like STU, often referenced as "lower tier" universities, do not demand selective admissions criteria and generally attract students from middle- and lower income populations.

Within most societies, class mobility for individuals is allowed to some extent. Mobility pathways typically occur through meritocracy (hard work), marriage, or educational attainment. Nonetheless, even though "one may exert influence over one's own class consciousness" in rising to a higher level, "one has little control over others'

views" about the person's status (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004, p. 659). For example, one may acquire increased economic status without real or perceived accompanying cultural or educational assets, or one may acquire higher educational standing without associated economic benefits or social regard from others.

Class Constraints: Economic

All societies are stratified to some degree according to groups or individuals distinguished in terms of economics, with those people having greatest wealth or access to resources typically occupying the highest rankings. Most literature categorizes schools and students among three to six hierarchical classes, starting with working class, lower middle class, middle class, and so on. In more simple terms, they are identified as low, middle, or high SES. Finn (1999) emphasized that statistical percentages lead us to believe that most poor Americans are the Browns or Blacks. For example, recent U.S. Census (2000) data show that 12% of Whites, 46% of African Americans, and 40% of Hispanics are living in poverty. In these statistics the percentages belie the actual total number within each population. Whites living in poverty actually outnumber the other populations; there are 5.4 million Whites, 4.6 million African Americans, and 2.8 million Hispanics classified as low SES. Explained in another way, more Whites live in poverty in the United States, even though percentages may suggest that people of Color dominate the lower income bracket.

Notwithstanding, the constraints of class weigh more heavily on people of Color due to increased oppressions against their race or ethnic origins. Today, very few Hispanics in the United States have managed to ascend to the rank of wealthy upper class. "Latinos are largely concentrated at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder"

(Gutierrez, 2004, p. 279). Holding all other factors constant (such as immigrant status and length of time in the United States), most of the wage disparities among Whites, Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics is explained by the levels of educational achievement. Roughly 50% of Latino/a students drop out of school in the transition from eighth to ninth grade, but the bad news continues: An additional 50% are lost, or 3 of every 4 Hispanic students (75%) do not graduate from high school. Of the limited number of Hispanic students who start and persist through a 4-year college or university program, the graduation rate is 9% (Nora, 2003; Valdes, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999).

McLaren (2003) has drawn greater distinction among the groups in poverty by further categorizing some as the *new underclass.* According to McLaren, the underclass consists of Black, Hispanic, and Asian class factions together with the unemployed and underemployed, the handicapped, large groups of women, the aged, and other marginalized economic populations. McLaren (2003) emphasized the realization that "people don't inhabit cultures or social classes but *live out class or cultural relations,*" some of which may follow dominant culture values and some of which may profile the values of subordinate groups (p. 75).

Personally, I am at a loss to understand the hardships of poverty that low-income students confront. No amount of reading literature could adequately equip me to understand how deeply money and class "matters" (hooks, 2000). Starting with the application for their financial aid package for college, low-income students "must make their way through *more* paperwork than middle-class students with *less* knowledge and support…how deep their worry, how daily they live on the edge of a financial precipice" (Bloom, 2005, p. 72-73). Relentlessly, college paperwork under federal guidelines

"commits these students' class position to paper, it simultaneously and consistently denies the material and lived realities that *result* from this class position" (Bloom, p. 78). More terrifying than the Byzantine process of procuring and sustaining financial assistance is the outcome: "Students with the most financial need have increased their debt burden faster than have traditional college-age students…[and] students with the most need have the least chance of paying off that debt" (Bloom, p. 74).

Even for those working-class students who do graduate from college, it is unclear whether their earnings after college can justify the money they must borrow to complete their education. Working-class graduates, on average, earn less postcollege than higher income students with a comparable degree and credentials (Bloom, 2005). The type of higher education also makes a difference: Students graduating from working-class institutions have less earning potential than students graduating from elite universities (Bennett, 2004; Sharp, 2004). Even more compounded is the future of low-income Latino/a or African American students. When compared to their White counterparts holding equivalent degrees, Latino/as and African Americans earn less.

In 2003, the average cumulative debt of student borrowers in the United States was $27,600 (Bloom, 2005). For STU graduates in 2003, the average indebtedness was $15,000; the payback period generally allows 10 years (B. Jones, Dean of Enrollment Management, personal communication, July 14, 2005). In essence, colleges and universities invite low-income Others to dismiss all indignities as they "take a place at a table where they cannot afford to eat" (Bloom, 2005, p. 81). Meanwhile, faculty at colleges and universities remains 90% White, middle-class, and "unaware" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, 2005). What is at issue is the question of class reproduction and how

schooling practices that position select groups within asymmetrical power relations serve to replicate the culture of the dominant class and perpetuate racialized inequalities (Darder et al., 2003). Critical theorists are particularly concerned with the "totalizing impact of capitalism…and its deleterious impact on working-class people in the United States and abroad" (Darder et al., p. 18).

Class Constraints: Gender (Working-Class Females)

The early socialist feminist Ann Marie Wolpe (1978, as cited in Weiler, 2003) indicted schools for keeping the roles of women in subjugated, stratified positions. Wolpe attacked interpretations that fail to recognize forces of the capitalist economy that inscribe and reproduce the needs for domestic, female labor, unpaid in the home and low-paid outside the home. Wolpe (as cited in Weiler, 2003) argued that school policies and curriculum historically have perpetuated ideological expectations of women in unpaid, low-paid, or dead-end jobs, "reproducing the oppression and subordination of women in the economy" (p. 274). Wolpe's work and numerous other feminists' contributions were valuable in pointing out the need to locate women's experiences and oppressions within the larger socioeconomic structure and, specifically, within schooling's hegemonic practices and views.

Many (Apple, 1979; hooks, 1994, 2000; Lather, 1991; Luttrell, 2003) have argued that schools are central to the process of maintaining and reproducing existing sexual divisions of labor; therefore, schooling is complicit in keeping women—especially single African American and Latina mothers—at the bottom of the economic and social ladder (Gutierrez, 2004; Luttrell, 2003). Scholars have pointed out the domestic nature of working-class girls' curriculum, the fewer number of girls in mathematics and science

courses, teachers' dissimilar expectations for boys and girls, and the unsettling fact that women are still excluded from certain university programs and professional jobs (Lubienski, 2003; Luttrell, 2003; Oakes, Joseph, & Muir, 2004; Polakow, Butler, Deprez, & Kahn, 2004).

Class Constraints: Race

Much of the literature on subordinate cultural populations has utilized the construct of race as a central category of analysis for interpreting social conditions of inequalities and marginalizations within schools (Banks & Banks, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001, 2005; Nieto, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). hooks (2000) explained, "It is impossible to talk meaningfully about ending racism without talking about class" (p. 7). Darder and Torres (2003) warned that we must recognize scholars and activists' efforts to build a political base among African Americans, Latino/as, and other subordinate cultural communities that generally gloss over class differences or ignore class conditions in schools and educational settings. "By doing so they have unwittingly perpetuated the vacuous and dangerous notion that the political and economic are separate spheres of society which can function independently—a view that firmly anchors and sustains prevailing class relations of power in society" (Darder & Torres, 2003, p. 248).

Our nation's schools and higher education institutions, which are segregated by race, are generally segregated by income, resulting in many forms of unequal educational opportunities and limitations (Bennett, 2004; Ginwright, 2004; Kozol, 1991; Orfield & Lee, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999, 2005; S. Willie, 2003). Scholars have shown that class and educational background have become codes for Whiteness or non-Whiteness, many times emphasizing the significance of class over race (Elenes, 2003; S. J. Lee, 2005). By

focusing on class, educators preserve Whiteness largely as invisible, serving to normalize Whiteness as "Americaness" and thereby to maintain its dominance (S. J. Lee, 2005, p. 144). Too often, students and teachers equate academic-honors programs and financial success with Whiteness but lower track classes and poverty with Blackness (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; S. J. Lee, 2005; Ogbu, 2003).

Giroux (1992) and hooks (1992) have criticized identity politics that position race or Blackness as a sign of social disorder and civic decay, while positioning Whiteness not only as privileged but also as the only referent for social hope, action, and change. West (1991, as cited in McKenna, 2003) explicated how discriminatory treatments, along with underlying assumptions, vastly differ according to class, hue, gender, sexual orientation, region, and age. To counter prejudicial treatments and hegemonic belief systems, hooks (1990, 1992, 1995) advocated "loving Blackness" as a "political stance and space of resistance" (1992, p. 10). hooks explained that racial integration in a social context (e.g., schools) where White supremacist systems are intact appears to promote social equality but in fact cannot do so "without changes in the culture's attitudes about Blackness and Black people" (p. 10). Too often Whites (and some Blacks) are "unable to let go the idea that Whites are somehow better, smarter, more likely to be intellectuals" (p10). Similar in thought and action, Darder et al. (2003) advocated for students to participate directly in cultural and political struggles in order to better define themselves, their histories and socioeconomic realities.

Class Constraints: Educational

Critical educators contend that schools actually work against the class interests of those students who are most economically and politically vulnerable within society

(Apple, 1979, 2003; Darder et al., 2003; Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2004). Relationships between social class and schooling closely align to the students and their families' class status and are assumed in diverse forms within the types of schools, teacher force, curriculum, or instructional approaches. The type of school (whether elite, professional, or traditional) generally mirrors its host community's social standing and expectations about the purpose of education. The type of teacher force in a school generally mirrors its student population, with more middle-class teachers employed in middle-class schools and teachers from working-class backgrounds choosing to teach in working-class schools. The type of curriculum (sanctioned and hidden) also correlates to the social standing of the students' families (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Pinar et al., 2000). "Regardless of high school size, the availability of AP [Advanced Placement] courses decreases as the percentage of African Americans and Latinos in the population increases" (Oakes et al., 2004, p. 75). Moreover, teacher attitudes and instructional approaches not only vary, but also too often do not match the learning dispositions of students of the working class and more likely favor dispositions of middle class students. Yet, the ideas and culture associated with the dominant higher class are argued to be the preferred content of the "best" schools (Giroux, 1992; Pinar et al., 2000).

Polakow et al. (2004) argued that societal institutions, particularly schools, function to subjugate the working class and keep them "shut out" of higher education. Within racially mixed schools, students of Color are still disproportionately overrepresented in low-level courses and underrepresented in critical courses, important factors in college admissions (Oakes et al., 2004). The point is that the differential

schooling—influenced by social class in America—predetermines that "poor children are prepared to become poor adults and rich children are prepared to become rich adults" (Finn, 1999, p. 182). Differential schooling produces savage inequalities. "Savage inequalities persist. Because a lot of well-meaning people are doing the best they can, but they simply do not understand the mechanisms that stack the cards against so many children" (Finn, p. 94).

Knapp and Woolverton (2004) emphasized that social class is fundamental to understanding the consequences of educational institutions' persistent omission of social class from discussions among educators and in teacher preparation programs. However, we must first recognize that people have differing perceptions of social class, the purposes of schooling, and the relationship between the two. Unless we address the social class disparities within and among educational institutions, we perpetuate "class-based differential teaching, to the detriment of children, school systems, and ultimately our nation" (Knapp & Woolverton, p. 657). Since education long has been associated with social and economic mobility, most people prefer not to dissect how educational systems inextricably permeate and reconstitute the layering of society into distinct classes.

Education is implicated in both the conception and the measurement of social class; it is difficult to talk about the former without the latter. Often one's educational level is the main facet of one's social-class position. Or, when discussing a school's role in guiding an individual's development, the reference implies opportunities for "preparation" and "advancement" to the next level (e.g., teacher certification program). American myths (e.g., honesty, smartness, and hard work reap the best rewards) also hide the "actual influence of social class on other aspects of educational or social life, and

limit our capacity to see and understand social conflicts related to class" (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004, p. 657). When considering the link between social class and educational advancement, important factors influencing educational attainment and credentials may be self-esteem, aspirations, and expectancy of success. Educational outcomes can constitute a kind of cultural capital that allows the holder to "purchase" certain positions in society (Bowl, 2003; McLaren, 2003).

Knapp and Woolverton (2004) delineated three competing perspectives that relate schooling to social class: (a) functional, (b) conflict, and (c) interpretive and critical. Functionalist thinking visualizes schools as an arena for sorting and selecting individuals for various future roles. Functionalists support the notion of meritocracy that social class is a reflection of effort and ability. Functionalists believe that the upper classes are comprised of exceptionally motivated and capable members, as opposed to the lower classes, whose members are the least industrious and capable. Unlike functionalists, conflict perspective thinkers believe that schools reinforce class inequality by transmitting the unequal power relationships and the values of the elite to the detriment of the Others. Through mechanisms like ability grouping, tracking, or cooperative learning projects, different knowledge, values, and skills are given to the various students within the different social classes (Pinar et al., 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). Working-class students are trained in the knowledge and behaviors required for blue-collar jobs, whereas upper and middle-class students are given the tools to acquire lucrative, high-status positions. In contrast, "interpretive and critical perspective thinkers focus on cultural transformation by viewing individuals within institutions as active, rather than passive, participants in the social construction of their own realities" (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004, p. 659). The

variance between interpretivists and criticalists stems from the interpretivists' concern with the meanings brought to social interactions by the teachers, students, and peers in the construction of school experiences. Criticalists, like interpretivists, seek the meanings but also address the questions of power, particularly with regard to the social, economic, and political inequalities in the schools. Criticalists believe that regardless of the elite-dominated oppressive educational hierarchy in which all the players participate, the students and teachers have the "capacity to resist and reconfigure their relationships" (Knapp & Woolverton, p. 660).

In the movement to understand curriculum as a political act (Freire, 1970; Pinar et al., 2000; Valenzuela, 1999), we must understand such methods of curriculum differentiation as tracking or leveling. Research shows that tracking students according to academic performance and ability results in tracking along social, economic, and racial lines, because the majority of White students are enrolled in higher level classes and most students of Color are enrolled in lower level classes (Ogbu, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999, 2005). Many working-class parents do not seem to understand the differentiated leveling process or how honors and advanced placement classes differ from skills classes. The *hidden curriculum,* as explained by McLaren (1994, 2003), deals with the tacit ways—outside of the course materials and formal lessons—in which students are induced to comply with the dominant ideologies and social practices related to morality, behavior, and authority. Elements of the hidden curriculum are not applied uniformly but are stratified according to race, gender, sexuality, and social class.

Using reproduction theory, both Apple (1997) and Giroux (2003) have demonstrated how lower class educational institutions, and to some extent middle-class

schools, function to reproduce the class structure of the workplace. They have maintained that the problems of schooling are tied to the reproduction of a system of social relations that perpetuates the existing structure of domination and exploitation (Darder et al., 2003; McCarthy, 1996; McKenna, 2003). Regardless of race, research has affirmed that students from a working-class background tend to be perceived as less capable than they probably are, whereas those students from families and communities in the higher class hierarchy tend to be perceived positively. Finn (1999) scrutinized the conditions of working-class schools versus gentry schools and the consequential attitudes of the students therein.

Research evidence strongly shows that the teaching staff bring to their school certain class-based sensibilities rooted in their own social origin and life experiences. Like students, the teachers are sorted by class backgrounds among the various schools and among the various school programs (Finn, 1999). Unlike most working-class students' limited choices in higher education, faculty members do not passively accept their school assignments but actively participate in school choice. Evidence suggests that teachers in a typical working-class school are more likely to resemble the school's community, whereas, teachers serving in upper middle-class schools and higher tier universities more closely resemble the values of the supportive community (alumni and donors) (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004).

Beyond school choice, a teacher's instructional approach more likely correlates to his or her perceived level of the students' social class. Not only the rigor of curriculum content, but also the instructional activities are differentiated according to teachers' perceptions about the social class of the students. With working-class students, teachers

employ harsher discipline tactics, employ explicit directives, use less figurative language, rarely trust the students to guide their own learning, and only expect minimal work to be accomplished. For higher status social class students, teachers tend to use more cooperative-style discipline measures, use more context-bound language, provide more opportunities for learner control of learning tasks, express higher expectations for school success, and interact with learners in a more personal way (Bartolome, 1996; Knapp & Woolverton, 2004; Olneck, 2004; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). Pinar et al. (2000), like other scholars, acknowledged that conventional teacher education programs inadequately prepare teachers for urban settings; "specifically, working-class students are placed at an educational disadvantage by inadequately trained teachers (p. 756).

From the overwhelming evidence, the literature indicates working-class students in the social, political, and economic mainstream have restricted access to a high-quality curriculum (Finn, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1998, 2004; Nieto, 1996; Pinar et al., 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) suggested that using the curriculum of popular culture provides one means to promote countertext. Popular culture can provide students with an identity, especially for working-class children, which, according to Aronowitz and Giroux, is rapidly diminished by schooling's hegemonic curriculum. "Popular culture expresses an aesthetic of pleasure in contrast to the schools, which are institutions of deprivation" for working class students (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 285).

"Additionally, counseling shortages in urban schools affect both the quality and quantity of advisement for low-income students, particularly advice about academic

requirements for college admissions and success" (Oakes et al., 2004, p. 70). Even so, the "canon wars" over the transformation of curriculum and pedagogy "have been replaced by capitulation to high-stakes testing," in which working-class students fare even worse (King, 2004, p. 372).

Concerning social class differences in orientations toward knowledge, scholars have noted that working-class parents tend to be more overtly directive when instructing their children while middle-class parents tend to use questions, discussion, and playfulness in child rearing (Delpit, 1995; Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; Lubienski, 2003; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). Most insightful is Steele's (2004) work on orientations toward knowledge. Steele's concept of *stereotype threat* suggests that the academic performance of racial and ethnic minorities is impaired by their own adopted stereotypes about their inabilities to be competent in school settings. These unintended negative images of self are particularly destructive within high-stakes school accountability systems (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004; S. Willie, 2003).

Class Constraints: Social and Cultural

> It is difficult, perhaps impossible in some respects, to disentangle social class from other categorical social descriptors (like race and ethnicity), from culture (viewed as shared meanings held by social groups), and from ideology (the system of values and beliefs to which societies subscribe and that serve as a justification for actions). (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004, p. 657)

Beyond the economic grounds of wealth and political power, Apple (1997) asserted there is also a cultural foundation to social class. This foundation is ultimately connected to the individual's construction of a social identity and status. The cultural foundation of social class involves members of higher society distinguishing themselves according to tastes, preferences, and manners. Among the markers of social class identity

are speech patterns, clothing, and behaviors. For example, working-class students (women, African Americans, and Others) need to affirm their own identities through the "use of a language, a set of social relations and body of knowledge that reconstructs and dignifies the cultural experiences" that constitute the texture of their daily lives (Darder et al., 2003, p. 52). Such sociocultural class characteristics can be thought of as "both determinants and consequences" that affect how people are positioned to live their lives; in a sense, people are held captive by their own and others' shared view of their social class positioning within society (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004, p. 658).

According to French sociologist Bourdieu (1984), Whiteness is a position of class mediated through and acknowledged as *cultural capital.* The concept of cultural capital refers to "ways of talking, acting, modes of style, moving, socializing, forms of knowledge, language practices, and values…such traits are to a great extent culturally inscribed and often linked to the social class standing" (Darder et al., 2003, p. 93). Students of low-income families inherit substantially different cultural capital than do students from the dominant culture. Generally, schools value and reward students who exhibit cultural capital of the dominant class, which usually is also exhibited by the teachers. "Schools systematically devalue the cultural capital of students who occupy subordinate class positions" (Darder et al., p. 94). Critical race theorists have linked notions of cultural capital with schooling's reproduction of knowledge, which functions primarily to sustain the inequality of class relations within schools and society

Hooks (2000) explained that in most schools, negative stereotypes about poor and working-class people are the main perspectives evoked. Aronowitz (1989, as cited in Pinar et al., 2000) claimed that "schools function to strip away identity from working

class students" and to reconstitute their identity formation in terms of the prevailing hegemonic social order (p. 304). What is more, the dominant culture seems hostile or indifferent to the deepening poverty and despair affecting the growing U.S. underclass (Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992; Olneck, 2004). Moreover, the uncaring wealthy powerful class, especially those in control of government, big business, and the mass media, have promoted "campaigns to place all accountability on the poor and to equate being poor with being worthless" (hooks, 2000, p. 45). The denigration of the poor is shared by many "greedy upper and middle-class citizens" whose own "class interests perpetuate the notion that the poor are mere parasites and predators" (hooks, 2000, p. 45).

Critical scholars have argued that schools rarely share works that look at how poor and working-class families create loving environments; instead, the dominant culture has been and remains primarily concerned with highlighting what does not work in poor families (Bowl, 2003; Valdes, 1996; Villenas, 1996, 2000). Often teachers, along with other middle-class citizens, use insulting diatribes to address the growing dropout rate of underclass students (Giroux, 1992; Valenzuela, 1999, 2005). Similarly, impoverished students and their families are "condemned as a cause of their own misery" rather than praised for "resiliency amidst the most degrading economic and social conditions" (Giroux, 1992, p. 112). Historically, in the United States, "Spanish Americans were [and are] portrayed as a poor, proud, stable and cohesive group, with a value orientation strongly emphasizing interpersonal relations rather than ideas, abstractions or materials possessions" (Gutierrez, 2004, p. 272).

In her research on nontraditional working-class students in higher education, Bowl (2003) built a theoretical framework to analyze how the students' cultural capital

was like and unlike the universities' expectations of college students. For example, institutional expectations assumed that all college students had access to computers for word processing assignments, the availability of study space at home, and the ownership of books. Other vital mismatches of cultural capital include "language and ways of expressing one's self…failure to speak is taken as educational deficit, which the student must remedy or leave" (Bowl, p. 139). To avoid feelings of estrangement, students from working-class backgrounds may assimilate by changing speech patterns and by "dropping any habit that might reveal them to be from a non-materially privileged background" (hooks, 2003, p. 145). Such demands that individuals become border crossers evoke psychic turmoil. In betrayal, they dismiss their class origin, or they inhabit two different class worlds (Anzaldua, 2002; Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992; Valdes, 1996). Giroux (1992) stated that as teachers become border crossers,

> knowledge and power can come together not to merely affirm difference but to also interrogate it…and to engage a vision of community in which student voices define themselves in terms of their distinct social formations and their broader collective hopes. (p. 35)

What happens to students who receive impressions from others that they are unworthy or subordinate on the societal level? Studies suggest that ethnic identity has become confounded with academic identity (Steele, 2004). Furthermore, those students who forge bicultural identities are more academically successful. Such individuals move between cultures, creatively code-switching according to circumstance. Conversely, those students who encounter distorted reflections of themselves develop negative self-concepts and do not cultivate a sense a hope for the future (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). The stereotype threat "in the air" has both an immediate effect and a cumulative erosive effect, especially on immigrant youth (Suarez-Orozco et al., p. 428). Steele (2004) argued

that stereotype threat shapes one's social self-concept, intellectual performance, and intellectual identity. The social-academic trajectories of youth, no matter what class level, are more promising if they can sustain positive relations with family, community adults, academic mentors, or peers (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004).

Overall, research studies with low-income students have placed an overwhelming emphasis on linguistic and cultural "deficiencies" tied to academic achievement. This limited view of the problem avoids the impact of class, as if somehow the problems of students from subordinate cultural populations can be resolved simply through the introduction of culturally relevant curriculum or the enactment of language programs (Darder & Torres, 2003). King (2004) expressed disdain for the excessive research about the education of students of Color that has emphasized sociocultural deficits in order for students to be assimilated or acculturated. Such research has devalued students' cultural capital rather than honoring the experiences of poor students and working-class women of all ethnicities (hooks, 2000, 2003; Giroux, 1992). King (2004) argued this focus on deficits is missing the fundamental point of democratic education (Ogbu, 2003; Steele, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). King (2004) advocated that cultural-social "democracy demands pluralism, not cultural negations or absorption" (p. 372). hooks (2003) suggested that being wary of scholarship that portrays the experiences and thoughts of materially privileged people as normative: "There can be no intervention that challenges the status quo if we are not willing to interrogate the way our presentation of self as well as our pedagogical process is often shaped by middle-class norms" (p. 147).

When social class is discussed, it is usually viewed as relational, not as oppositional. Privileged individuals are constantly "normalizing" their identity and

worldview through hegemonic discourses (Foley, 2002, p. 164). Hegemony refers to a process of social control, "control that is carried out through the moral and intellectual leaderships of a dominant socio-cultural class over subordinate groups" (Gramsci, 1971, as cited in Darder et al., 2003, p. 13). Within the context of schooling, hegemonic discourses are carried out through the daily practice of norms that favor the interest of the dominant class (King, 2004; Pinar et al., 2000). Through socialization and consensus, students support the interest of the ruling elite even when such actions are clearly in contradiction with a student's own class interests. However, within this process of domination "also can be found the seeds of resistance" (Darder et al., p. 7). Hegemony is not a static or absolute state; thus, the process must be understood as an ongoing critique. Teachers are challenged to recognize their responsibility to critique and transform classroom conditions tied to hegemonic processes that perpetuate economic, social, and cultural marginalization of subordinated groups. To challenge bourgeois hegemony, teachers are urged to create learning communities where everyone's voice and narratives can be heard and each person's presence recognized (hooks, 2003). "In this respect, the language of education that students take with them from their university experience should embody a vision capable of providing them with a sense of history, civic courage, and democratic community" (Giroux, 1992, p. 91).

Class Constraints: Place

An examination of place constraints and power is paramount to ongoing discussions about the legacies and futures of HBCUs and about the students, particularly Others who attend HBCUs. As changing demographics cause geographic boundaries in cities across the nation to shift, many Hispanics and Latinos are claiming their rightful

space, while many African Americans are fearing loss of place. Indeed, "the populations of America's subordinated groups are changing the cultural landscapes of our urban centers" (Giroux, 1992, p. 111). "As class divisions grow deeper…the United States appears to be refiguring its political, social and cultural geography in a manner that denies rather than maintains a democratic community" (Darder & Torres, 2003, p. 245). The diminishing spirit and solidarity of communities, some scholars believe, is occurring because the culture of consumption has commodified and reified popular culture rather than honored historical and social roots. Young people are detaching themselves from their place of origin and community commitments in order to acquire merchandise and pursue pleasures. In Black life across classes, Black youth tend to place too much importance on material well-being, neglecting emotional development and community allegiance (Haymes, 2003; hooks, 1990, 2001).

The intent of this search of the literature was to find scholars who have examined pride of place as supported, or obstructed, by class and other oppressions. Immediately the search narrowed to the works of hooks (1990, 1992), Haymes (2003), McKenna (2003), and Giroux (1992). Among these scholars, the concept of *place-making* has been used to denote that places are significant because people assign value to them in relation to their socioeconomic projects and cultural identities (Haymes). Kincheloe and Pinar (1991, as cited in Pinar et al., 2000) employed "the notion of place as one organizing idea for political, autobiographical, racial, class, and gender issues in curriculum" (p. 289). Elizabeth St. Pierre (2000) used the South as the place to inform her view of Whiteness, politics, and race, "specifically the embattled reactionary politics of Louisiana" (as cited in Pinar et al., 2000, p. 289). Leaning heavily on the thoughts of these intellectual leaders

(hooks, Haymes, Giroux, Anzaldua, Villenas, and Elenes), this portion of the literature review begins with the understanding that place occupies both geographical and psychological terrains. “Place is the fusion of space and experience” (Friedland, 1992, as cited in Haymes, p. 212).

hooks (1990) defined *homeplace* as a site of Black resistance and liberation struggle. Haymes (2003) named *pedagogy of place* to describe connections (an individual’s or a collective group’s) between a site’s meaning and the psychological struggles therein. The rally term *borderlands,* employed by numerous Chicana/o and Latino/a scholars, signifies the literal geographic places and also symbolic spaces between countries as well as the social, cultural, and political differences (Anzaldua, 1999; Villenas et al., 2005). Giroux (1992) named *politics of place* to question the purpose, practice, power, “limits and possibilities that exist within the university at any given time in history” (p. 91). Giroux (1992) stated that institutions of higher education, regardless of academic status, “are places of moral and social regulation where a sense of identity, place, and worth is informed and contested through practices, which organize knowledge and meaning…It is furthermore, a place that is deeply political and unarguably normative” (p. 90). Dimitriadis (2005) used the term *homestead* to mark the sites where more and more young people are turning away from increasingly routinized schools toward alternative kinds of institutions (e.g., community centers) to stake meaningful spaces and places for themselves. These are sites where young people use their own educational texts (e.g., popular culture), which challenges educators to decenter assumptions about what “education” means for youth today (Dimitriadis).

"Historically, African American people believed that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack) had a radical political dimension" (hooks, 1990, p. 42). hooks claimed no intention of creating romanticized portraits but poignantly explained that the homeplace was the site of resisting oppressions, a safe place to heal wounds inflicted by racist domination.

> One's homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization. …Homes were where all black people could strive to be subjects, not objects, where we could be affirmed in our minds and hearts despite poverty, hardship and deprivation, where we could restore to ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world. (hooks, 1990, p. 42)

hooks (1990) clarified that through purposeful resistance, one seeks the healing in order to see more clearly. Thus, today's urban renewal (displacement) of older folks' homes, businesses, schools, and churches devalues their memories while dehumanizing or destroying their communities (Haymes, 2003). In other words, "an effective means of White subjugation of Black people globally has been the perpetual construction of economic and social structures that deprive many folks of the means to make homeplace" (hooks, 1990, p. 46).

Also thought provoking is hooks' (1990) concept of *aesthetics found, or not found, in place.* More than a philosophy of art and beauty, hooks (1990) described aesthetics as a force inhabiting space: a way of looking and becoming acutely aware of lack, of false materiality, or of beauty. Similarly, Kincheloe and Pinar (as cited in Pinar et al., 2000) examined "the world of appearances" and "the hidden meanings and functions of symbolic expression" as linked to a curriculum theory of place (p. 290). Thus, artistic expressiveness and cultural art forms intrinsically can serve political functions and serve as the foundation for emerging visions. The *aesthetics of Blackness* is neither fixed nor static and can help students analyze, challenge, and rewrite painful and anguished

representations of self or of their group (Haymes, 2003). Aesthetics of place is a powerful force that can be imagined, made, and renewed if experienced (hooks, 1990). Aesthetics can nourish one's sense of belonging, understanding, and pride of place.

> A concept of place brings the particularistic into focus; it locates understanding of the individual and the psychic as well as those social forces which are expressed in and through him or her. Without place, our appreciation of the particular tends towards vagueness and depersonalization. Place embodies the social and the particular. (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 291)

Class and race have had, and continue to have, great significance in terms of cultural identity and spatial organization of U.S. cities, neighborhoods, and schools. Generally, in the United States, the most integrated schools and communities for both Latinos and African Americans are in the small and rural towns and small-town school districts. The epicenters of segregation are concentrated in the central cities of large metropolitan areas. Within the inner cities, the vast majority of intensely segregated minority schools confront conditions of compounded poverty, which students in segregated White schools seldom experience (Orfield & Lee, 2005, p. 17). The ideological constructions of inner city problems have been associated with violence, joblessness, drugs, gangs, poverty, and single-parent households. In such images, Black spaces in the urban cities are represented as "spaces of pathology" or "spaces of disorder" (Haymes, 2003, pp. 216-217). Often, the media portray the problems of urban life with negative images such as the city as a jungle: segregated housing; cross-town busing; ethnic encroachment; migrants, homeless, and transients living in makeshift shanties or sleeping on the curb; displaced housing for urban development; "White flight" to the suburbs; newly arrived immigrants dislocating older immigrants; or "the street culture." Underlying these images that portray the inner city as dark and dangerous is the contrasting belief that the middle-class environment (of single-family homes,

condominiums, private schools, boutiques, specialty food stores, and historic centers) forms the basis of a stable community. Qualities associated with Whiteness are embodied in marketing brochures about the order, beauty, and tranquility of the middle-class suburbs. So too, the discourse of development is connoted with growth, evolution, and maturation. Meanwhile, the inner city, where numerous people of Color and impoverished people live in the most concentrated areas, is referenced as "the ghetto." According to Haymes, *degeneration* connotes slums, *regeneration* implies progress and renewal, and *gentrification* implies association with Whites or Whiteness. Such negative descriptions of the inner city cast a shadow on institutions struggling to preserve an image of integrity—like STU, the HBCU situated on the "East side."

Since inception, HBCUs—like Black churches—have been important sites for place making, for producing Black culture and Black identity (hooks, 1990, 1992, 1995). In fact, these institutions were always places "where African Americans have learned oppositional ways of thinking that enhance our capacity to survive and flourish" (hooks, 1995, p. 37). At first, Black colleges, Black churches, and Black-owned businesses were restricted by race to specific geographic areas in the states and cities. After hard-fought changes in laws and the legal system, today, race does not limit the potentials of some of these institutions as much as the impediments of poverty. Nonetheless, HBCUs, similar to Black-owned barbershops and other Black-operated venues, continue to provide the basis for building a community of resistance (Haymes, 2003; hooks, 1990). The venues allow "Blacks to speak in one's own voice" and provide "an arena for the formation and enactment of social identities" (hooks, 1990, p. 42). In these spaces for survival, Black

people develop self-definition linked to a consciousness of solidarity and to a politics of resistance.

Whether in the politics and geographies of cities or university settings, the saga of integrated spaces versus segregated spaces continues. In defense of self-segregation, hooks (1992) explained,

> Social manifestations of black separatism are often seen by whites as a sign of anti-white racism, when they usually represent an attempt by black people to construct places of political sanctuary where we can escape, if only for a time, white domination. (p. 15)

Within the university setting, Giroux (1992) advocated for border crossers to be afforded safe spaces where they can critically engage their teachers and other students as well as the possibilities and limits of their own positions as border crossers. "Border-crossers should not have to put their identities on trial each time they address social and political issues that they do not experience directly" (Giroux, 1992, p. 32). Put simply, students must be encouraged to cross ideological and political borders in a place that is pedagogically safe and socially nurturing rather than infused with the smugness of political assimilation (Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992). Hence, Giroux (1992) maintained border pedagogy can provide the conditions for students to engage in transformative consciousness to culturally remap terrains:

> A pedagogy in which occurs a critical questioning of the omissions and tensions that exist between the master narratives and hegemonic discourses that make up the official curriculum and the self-representations of subordinated groups as they appear in "forgotten" or erased histories, texts, memories, experiences and community narratives. (p. 33)

Haymes (2003) looked at the social forces that shape a city's evolution. Haymes explained, "The social geography of urban space is characterized by public spaces in the city that are positioned unequally in relation to one another with respect to power" (p.

213). The modern city is a testing ground of survival, of racialized power, and social control (Haymes). The loss of Black land means a loss of Black community along with a sense of meaningless and hopelessness that is becoming pervasive in contemporary Black life (Haymes). hooks (1992) maintained that the lifestyle of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure undermines the capacity to experience community and that Black people are complicitous in converting public space into private spaces of consumption. They are complicitous in silencing and marginalizing their own stories about place making. "By destroying or withdrawing the public sphere's physical space, urban Blacks are less able to sustain the networks of family and friends necessary for organizing their experience into a collective identity" (Haymes, p. 221). Haymes further stated, "The ideology of function obscures the role of conflict, domination, and resistance in defining what constitutes the public, and subsequently, how public spaces in the city should be used and assigned meaning" (p. 222). St. Pierre as well as Kincheloe and Pinar (as cited in Pinar et al., 2000) have "focused on the place called the South and the unique distortions remaining from its history" that affect the psyche (p. 291). In turn, Kincheloe and Pinar suggested employing "a synthesis of self and situation…to explore the possibility of cultural and educational renewal" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 291).

Of course, there are numerous borderlands in the world, but for the purpose of this study, the focus is on the geographic and symbolic borderlands shared by Mexico and the United States. Many families who are living in the borderlands maintain ties to Mexico while working in a setting that provides them with important opportunities not available to them in their country of origin (Valdes, 1996). Symbolically, the borderlands is a

discourse constructed for people living in the margins of U.S. society and culture—living between two worlds amid an oppositional language:

> It speaks against dualism, oversimplification, and essentialism. It is a discourse, a language, that explains the social conditions of subjects with hybrid identities. It is a discourse favored by people in-between U.S. and Mexican cultures, with identities that are in constant flux. It is a discourse and identity of difference and displacement. (Elenes, 2003, p. 191)

Dominant educational practices in the United States promote the assimilation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans to the dominant culture norms. Such demands evoke psychic turmoil (Anzaldua, 2002; Valdes, 1996). Furthermore, as explained earlier, place informs one's identity, politics, and race (St. Pierre, 2000), and hence a borders' discourse informs its inhabitants. Of importance is Giroux's (1992) advice for teachers to become border crossers in order to engage a vision of community.

Anzaldua's (1999) explanations of borderlands promote an understanding of Chicana/o identity and subjectivity, recognizing class, race, national, and sexual discontinuities with U.S. as well as other Chicana/o communities. "To survive the Borderlands, you must live *sin fronteras*/be a crossroads" (Anzaldua, 1999, p. 195). Being a crossroads does not imply a denial of difference; rather, it promotes "living as an intersection of all the border spaces that define race, class, gender, sexuality, [and] ethnicity" (McKenna, 2003, p. 435). Such constructs as borders, spaces, and places appear throughout recent theoretical literature, offering much promise for further explorations in this and future research.

Summary of Class Constraints: Living as an Intersection

Historically, teaching has been viewed as an upwardly mobile career choice for those from the working and lower middle classes. Generally, Latina/o and Black teachers

come from lower income backgrounds than White teachers, and minority preservice teachers tend to be slightly older than White teacher candidates (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). In the 2000 study by Wenglinsky (as cited in Zumwalt & Craig) of 40,000 prospective teachers at 152 institutions in the southeastern United States, preservice Black and Latino/a teachers from lower SES backgrounds were more likely to attend small rather than large institutions, public rather than private institutions, and colleges rather than universities.

Clearly, class cannot be examined in isolation, because class refers to multiple practices linked to economic, social, religious, political, psychological, and geographic relations that govern life (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004; McLaren, 2003; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). The constraints and limitations of socioeconomic class are often invisible, dismissed, or wrongly used by teachers to prioritize class-specific characteristics over intellectual or social assets. Intellectual and sociocultural class characteristics are both determinants and consequences that affect how people are positioned to live their lives (Knapp & Woolverton; Steele, 2004). Inevitably, neighborhoods, organizations, schools and colleges, and racial and ethnic groups are characterized in terms of their perceived social and economic class positions (Delpit, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas, 1996, 2000).

Although a handful of HBCUs are notably prestigious, STU is considered a "lower tier" or "Tier 3" working-class university based on its admissions criteria, students' SES profiles, small enrollment, dangerously scarce financial and endowment reserves, and limited academic course and program offerings. Such characterization is true, but the compounded negativity is hard to overcome. The image of "lower tier"

undermines the institution's student recruitment and retention efforts as well as the institution's integrity in its city, state, and higher education community (Freeman, 2005; C. Willie et al., 2006). For many reasons, STU is not a "power player," quite plausibly rooted in the fact that ethnic and Black identities have been confounded with deficit academic images (hooks, 2000; Steele, 2004; Valdivia, 2005). Some students do select STU because of their former poor performance on standardized exams and the institution's quasi-open admissions policy. Other students who have achieved high academic accomplishments, nonetheless, select STU based on the small classes, scholarship incentives, specific program offerings, close proximity to home, or the appeals of its ethnically diverse student population and even its working-class student population.

With these understandings of class in mind, how would this study of the perceptions and experiences of Mexican American teacher candidates at one HBCU be situated within the expansive field of writings and research regarding ramifications of class in educational settings? As implicated in Haymes' (2003) work, this study about students at STU stands amid urban Black struggles of degeneration, regeneration, and gentrification. Since inception, HBCUs have been important homeplaces to "love Blackness," take a political stance, glean pride, garner resistance, and find liberation (hooks, 1990, 1992, 1994, 2000, 2003a). In a society with widening class differentiation and racialized inequalities, STU and its teacher education program must address questions of power and reframe understandings, particularly with regards to the inequalities in the schools and to what it means for STU students to get educated, live, work and struggle in society (McLaren, 2003).

At issue for college officials, teacher-educators, and teacher-trainees are revelations that schools intentionally and unintentionally reproduce stratified class relations. This means that a differentiated curriculum or differential schooling predetermines that poor students are prepared to become poor adults, whereas rich students in prestigious schools are prepared to become rich adults (Finn, 1999, McLaren, 2003). For prospective teachers and teacher educators, this means teachers from low-income backgrounds are more likely to teach in low-income schools, and working-class colleges are more likely to produce the teachers who willingly teach inner-city children of low-income means (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). It is critical for STU administrators, the supervisory board, and faculty to rethink how schooling practices position select groups and serve to replicate the culture of the dominant class (Darder et al., 2003; Valdes, 1996).

Conflicted Lens of Whiteness

White privilege refers to choices and behaviors that White people take for granted but people of Color cannot (McIntosh, 1989). "Whiteness creates itself as a norm to privilege its own power" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 353). White privilege is a set of options, opportunities and opinions that are acquired and sustained at the expense of people of working class and racial heritages. Unless challenged, White privilege may establish an unintended sense of White supremacy (Cary, 2001; Chabram-Dernersesian, 1997; Collins,1991, 2000; Ellsworth, 1992, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993, 1997; hooks,1992, 1995; Lather, 1991, 2000; Roman, 1997; Scheurich, 1993, 2000; Villenas, 2000). Moving within the understandings and perils of Whiteness, I have been particularly interested in

learning about methodologies to interrogate my own Whiteness and its impact on my research.

Whiteness and Crisis of Representation

According to Giroux (1992), since far too many Whites do not question the norm of Whiteness as an ethnic category, this suppression secures the dominance of Whiteness by appearing to be invisible. hooks (1992) argued, "Whiteness does not exist without knowledge of blackness….One does not exist without the other. Hence, Whiteness is not invisible" (p. 167). Yet, this definition of White as a corollary of being Black leaves out Brown, biracial-hybridity, and multiethnic markers (Valdivia, 2005).

Ayers (1997) described White racism as "more than bias or prejudice, more than a few bad ideas floating around aimlessly—it includes the structures of privilege and oppression linked to race and backed up by force" (p. 133). The geography of Whiteness is "a spatial concept not necessarily based on a conscious choice" (p. 125). Ellsworth (1997) addressed its fluidity: "Whiteness is always more than one thing and…it is never the same thing twice" (p. 261). Ellsworth (1997) further questioned how or whether academics of any color should conceptualize Whiteness as an identity:

> What is gained and or lost in attempts to "end racism" when whiteness is defined not as an identity, but as a practice; a form of property; a performance; a constantly shifting location upon complex maps of social, economic, and political power; a form of consciousness; a form of ignorance; a privilege; something those of us who "are" white must unlearn; something we whites fear, something that gives us pleasure; something we desire; something we must name and describe and understand; something we must change; an invisible something that we must make visible, finally at this moment in history, to our white selves? (p. 264)

Frankenberg (1993) warned of self-critical Whites' "paying too much attention to the white subject," themselves, running the risk of "neglecting the structure they seek to

change" (p. 178). In a deeply thought-provoking study, Frankenberg (1993) studied White women, showing how White privilege is obscured, how the system obscures the power of White privilege, and how Whiteness and White racism claim a lot of space.

Villenas (2000) scorned the arrogance of Western feminists, noting that "even the most well-meaning first world women" in their images of women of Color have created a cultural Other, using interpretation as resistance but creating "a new wave of exoticism" that replicates dominant discourses (p. 80-81). Furthermore, "racialized identities are often manipulated and commodified vis-à-vis the majority culture in the research field" (Villenas, 2000, p. 76). On a similar note, Lather (1991) bemoaned interventionary moves that render people passive, oppressed, or manipulated and noted that the very efforts to liberate actually perpetuate relations of dominance.

hooks (1992, 1995) pointed out that Blacks have, since slavery, known "special" knowledge of Whiteness "that has not been recorded in written material because its purpose was to help Black folks cope and survive in a White supremacist society" (p. 166). Thus, it should come as no surprise that Chabram-Dernersesian (1997) revealed,

> Chicanas/os have nourished their own counterdiscourse around whiteness as a way to navigate the social text; name social relations; negotiate a political identity…and imagine a different kind of social location for themselves as well as others, including different types of "white identities and subjectivities." (p. 111)

Self-Interrogation of Whiteness

Ellsworth (1997) asserted that the power of Whiteness "lies in part in its ability not to name its particularities" (p. 265). This dilemma is created because "individuals and groups cannot destabilize Whiteness enough to escape it" (Ellsworth, 1997, p. 267). We can never escape or leave it, but we can study it and reflect on its impact (Cary, 2006).

Consequently, Ellsworth (1997) suggested that researchers not respond to racialized frames of Whiteness but instead evoke the questions in self-interrogation.

In the study of Latino/a populations, McLaren (2003) suggested two approaches—reflexivity and deconstruction—to free the analysis from fixed categories and deficit theories. Whereas reflexivity questions its own authority, deconstructive ethnography surrenders its authority. Scheurich (1993) proposed two suggestions for confronting issues of White racism:

> We need to make conscious, especially within our intellectual work, the fact that in our society all people are racialized persons…[and] we must undertake this effort in a way that does not attempt to separate the "good" Whites, willing to confront White racism, from the "bad" Whites, unwilling to confront White racism. No individual White gets to be an exception because of his antiracism. (p. 127)

Roman (1997) expressed disgust for redemptive discourses that mask the recognition of one's own systemic complicity in racial inequalities and exploitative commitments. She asserted that White authors, "to avoid fantasies of redemption, must not flinch from recognizing and critiquing the various forms of patriarchal colonialism/neocolonialism that sustain them" (Roman, 1997, p. 275). According to Roman, the best way to divest the possession of Whiteness is to offer space for the rewriting of culture from different viewpoints. Both Scheurich (1993) and Frankenberg (1993) targeted this thought by urging that investigations of White racism begin at the micro, personal level and move to the macro, institutional or societal levels. For many feminists, the "personal is political"; yet, Ellsworth (1997) claimed that the personal is not the same as the private. "The personal is usually just the highly particular…the private, the place we 'keep it to ourselves' is where our most idealistic and our deadliest politics are lodged and revealed" (Williams, 1991, as cited in Ellsworth, 1997, p. 362).

Apple (1997) agreed that we must interrogate the "hidden motives" in the "social geography of Whiteness," which are in part a class discourse as well (p. 127). Apple added, "Why should we assume that the personal is any less difficult to understand than the external world?" (p. 127).

Cary's (2001) approach to focus on exclusions is equally important to this study. For example, as highlighted by Cary, impositions by Whiteness and the ways in which power and knowledge discourses are constructed "are less visible and more dangerously exclusivist," like the normalizations that produce conceptions of good teacher and good citizen and the exclusions inherent in multicultural education programs:

> By defining something previously unarticulated, whiteness may be interrogated as a standpoint of privilege, a structural advantage, and a place from which to Other all those considered non-white….This point of entry into a historically Othered and marginalized discursive practice suggests distinct possibilities for interrupting the dominant curative and assimilationist multicultural education project. (Cary, 2001, p. 424)

As noted, Ellsworth (1997) recommended self-interrogation regarding Whiteness. Pinar et al. (2000) recommended that the dynamics of White racism be made visible by questioning and interrogating how forms of White oppressions are already inscribed in textbooks, policies, teaching practices, the curriculum, and wider culture. Ellsworth (1992) explained that it is impossible for any single voice, including professors in the classroom, to assume the position of authority or origin of knowledge about their students' experiences with racism:

> I as a professor could *never know* about the experiences, oppressions, and understandings of other participants in the class.…In fact I understood racism no better than my students did, especially those students of color.…My experiences do not provide me with a ready-made analysis of or language for understanding my own implications in racist structures. My understanding and experience of racism will always be constrained by my white skin and middle-class privilege. (pp. 100-101)

Ellsworth further emphasized that conversational exchanges among students and between students and teachers are essential inside and outside of class. Stereotypes thrive when there is silence and distance (hooks, 1992). Frankenberg (1993) reiterated, "Practice is ultimately more significant than identity in determining one's relationship to systems of domination" (p. 182)

Institutions of Higher Education

Discursive Practices and Ideologies

According to Frankenberg (1993), a landscape is influenced by the principle residence ideologies, and vice versa; ideologies are influenced by the landscape. Consequently, the old and new ways of perceiving environments require being on trajectories from lesser to greater awareness of institutional, social, and structural oppressions, "rather than confining attention to individual prejudice and discrimination" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 167). I emphasize these points to suggest that institutions like STU have become trapped in organizational discourses. Therefore, to duly explore such discourses, it is important for me to examine discursive practices that occur within the context of the HBCU. In fact, Giroux (1992) implied that institutions of higher learning perpetuate a particular knowledge, particular social relations, and told versus untold stories:

> The sphere of higher education represents an important public culture that cultivates and produces particular stories of how to live ethically and politically; its institutions reproduce selected values, and they harbor in their social relations and teaching practices specific notions regarding what knowledge is of most worth, what it means to know something, and how one might construct representations of themselves, others, and the social environment. (p. 91)

College Choice, Persistence, and Graduation Rates of Students of Color

Crucial to the context of this study is recognition of the process of college choice by students of Color in higher education and the factors that influence retention rates. Over the last decade, increased requirements for college admissions have made it far more difficult for students to qualify if they have not progressed through rigorous science and mathematics courses from kindergarten to high school (Oakes et al., 2004). Research studies have revealed that the "lower a student's SAT score and family income level, the narrower the geographical range and the quality of the institutions considered" (Zemsky & Oedel, 1983, as cited in Tobolowsky, Outcalt, & McDonough, 2005, p. 65).

Still, parental encouragement is the strongest predictor of college choice and enrollment among students of Color—an even stronger predictor than SES or the student's intelligence (Tobolowsky et al., 2005). Additional factors that chiefly influence college choice are campus visits, accessible printed and Web-based information about the institution, and personal contact with representatives of the college or alumni who volunteer as recruiters. A recent study of high school students in California conducted by Tobolowsky et al. (2005) found that African Americans are more willing than Latinos to travel and live farther away from home to attend college. They found students' viewpoints about diversity varied: "While a number of African American high school students favor choosing HBCUs because they believe the campuses to be primarily African American, other African Americans are dissuaded because of this very perception…they want to interact with everybody, not just one race of people" (Tobolowsky et al., p. 69). Yet, the prevailing perception is that an HBCU is "where it's all minorities" (Tobolowsky et al., p. 72).

Research also has revealed that the types of high school populations, whether segregated or nonsegregated, play an important role in college selection. Diversity thus remains a prominent consideration in the selection process (S. Willie, 2003). It is important for potential applicants and the public to access accurate information about colleges and universities, such as the up-front and hidden tuition and living costs and the ethnic and cultural composition of the student body. The current demographics—or altered diversities—as well as the exact costs of many of the HBCUs are neither well known nor well published (Tobolowsky et al., 2005).

Bennett (2004) examined data from the 1960s to 1990s to find explanations for lower college enrollments, participation rates, and persistence among students of Color. Among multiple factors identified, the following are salient:

> Important reasons for college enrollment declines among African Americans and Latinos are increasing segregation in the elementary and secondary schools, attendance in inferior urban public schools, rising college costs, inadequate assistance…changes in financial aid policies that come increasingly in the form of repayable loans rather than grants.…Inadequate precollegiate education, coupled with rising standards in college entrance exams and a lack of counseling and remedial support, contribute to the declines in college access and academic success. (Bennett, 2004, pp. 852-853)

Bennett's report, which summarized extensive data on dropouts, high school achievement levels, and college access and retention, was collected from five locations (Houston, Chicago, Atlanta, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles). According to Bennett, evidence revealed that the college-eligible pool of students is shrinking among African Americans and Hispanics, due to the alarming rate of high school dropouts (43% for both African Americans and Hispanics, compared to 25% for Whites and 15% for Asians). Meanwhile, national and regional projections forecast that growing and emerging occupations will require more employees with a postsecondary education. In Texas the

college participation rate of eligible students has declined from 5.3% to 4.6% during the last decade and is projected to continue this decline in coming decades (NCES, 2003). Such data are reported in this review of literature to emphasize the challenges HBCUs confront in recruiting future classes. The literature contains little or no mention of non-Black students or the expanded role of HBCUs to serve other populations in the 21st century.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions

In 1986, the creation of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) brought leaders from 2-year and 4-year colleges together with business leaders. HACU's most successful victory was the establishment of Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) as a federally recognized category. HSIs, unlike HBCUs or Native American Tribal Colleges, "do not necessarily have a specific *historic* mission toward Latinos" (MacDonald, 2004, p. 284). Instead, the U.S. Department of Education (as cited in MacDonald) has defined HSIs as postsecondary institutions with at least 25% Hispanic full-time enrollment and also 50% or more low-income students. By being included under Title V with Tribal Colleges and HBCUs, HSIs are "allowed a larger slice of the federal pie" (MacDonald, p. 284). Located in nine states and Puerto Rico, the 197 HSIs are, according to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (1998),

> culturally sensitive schools best able to educate and create opportunities for Hispanics to pursue excellence and support local communities….culturally sensitive to issues many students face such as being first in their families to make the commitment to go to college and often times, single parents already working full jobs….HSIs provide crucial research, support, and service to some of the nation's most impoverished communities. (Inside cover)

Noteworthy for this study are the private and public institutions in central Texas and designated as HSIs: one located in Austin, Texas (St. Edward's University), and seven in San Antonio (Our Lady of the Lake University, Palo Alto College, San Antonio College, St. Mary's University, St. Philip's College, The University of Texas at San Antonio, the University of Texas Health Science Center, and University of the Incarnate Word) (White House Initiative, 1998). Of course, tuition costs and types of financial aid play a major role in college choice. For example, STU is less expensive than St. Edward's University but costs considerably more than the public University of Texas at San Antonio. Also, some types of state assistance to supplement tuition costs for prospective teachers is available through public institutions but not private.

National Latino/a Education Research Agenda Project (NLERAP)

Guidelines for improvements with regard to inclusion and positive recognition of Mexican Americans are promoted by the National Latino/a Education Research Agenda Project (NLERAP, 2000). Its guiding principles include the following: (a) honor sociocultural perspectives, (b) recognize sociopolitical and historical contexts of Latina/o education, (c) incorporate community perspectives and mentor participants throughout the process, and (d) promote social justice and democratic ideals. Additionally, NLERAP is grounded in the principles of action research, which uses appropriate or innovative methodologies, addresses issues such as insider/outsider identities, encourages the reflective process, and generates new understandings that support the improvement of Latino/a education. Building on these suggestions, as the study progressed, I queried, "What are the candidates' perceived barriers, resistance methods, and strategies

employed to negotiate the Black college experience? Is one's Mexican American identity displaced or suppressed in order to negotiate curriculum spaces?"

Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Black Education

Across academia, the HBCUs are joined by title but marginalized by piercing hegemonic conditions. HBCUs have endured the tides from the Reconstruction era to *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, KS., et. al.* to today's reconceptualized mission. By confronting the daunting challenges of the past, present, and future, HBCUs fight to sustain their visions while harnessing their assets as a lever for progress. During his presentation at the 2000 AERA conference, Hilliard said,

> We belong to the African family and we are either uninformed or have lost our collective memory of the fact that we are people with a long tradition of excellence in education, socialization and mastery of our environment and life circumstances.

From the turbulent past to the present, HBCUs honor the richness of African American heritage (Bennett, 2004; Hilliard, 2000; Tobolowsky et al., 2005), while negotiating and operating within the dominant society pedagogy to assure all graduates are effectively prepared for careers, leadership, graduate studies, and service (NCES, 2003; also noted within an STU 2000 college bulletin). But inherent in decisions about Black education exists a multicultural paradox: wider attention of Black educators to norms set by White discourses, in effect, narrows or limits practices emphasizing African American heritage.

Prior to 1950, over 75% of Black college students attended HBCUs due to segregation laws (Bennett, 2004). In contrast, while today the 103 HBCUs represent only 3% of the nation's 4,084 institutions of higher learning, just 25% of all African American students earn their undergraduate degrees and 30% earn their master's degrees at HBCUs

(National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, 2000). Noteworthy for this study are data showing that more than 50% of African American U.S. public school teachers have graduated from HBCUs (King, 2005; C. D. Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004). Among recent African American high school graduates, there is a resurgence of interest in HBCUs, partially due to the affirmative action cutbacks across the nation that have caused selective public universities to be less welcoming toward students of Color (Tobolowsky et al., 2005). Students are finding that HBCUs continue to provide "an important avenue to an education, and in turn, a better life" (Tobolowsky et al., p. 72). Yet, a dichotomy exists among the nation's HBCUs. Spellman College is the wealthiest, having a $229 million endowment, whereas Morris Brown College's loss of accreditation cited its $27 million debt and absence of a clear plan to pay it off. Indeed, the varied nature of the HBCUs finds some with reputations of academic prestige and others with noncompetitive admissions. "In the jungle of higher education…these colleges serve a purpose," but they are among the most battered by the changing marketplace (June, 2003, p. A24).

Still, more research studies are needed to reveal the vocalized but rarely documented "persistent importance of HBCUs in the 21st century" (Gay, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2003; C. D. Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004). Despite the generally superior resources and facilities in PWIs and "despite the fact that Black students attending White schools tend to have stronger college-entry-level skills" (Bennett, 2004, p. 854), Black students attending Black schools achieve greater academic success and personal development. In fact, Black students at a variety of HBCUs are portrayed as "more satisfied and engaged in campus life" (Allen, 1987, p. 28; also see McCormack &

Robinson, 2003). Scholars (Banks, 2001; Banks & Banks, 2004; Gay, 2004) have attributed these outcomes to the smaller classes, faculty interest, and "friendlier more supportive atmosphere for Blacks on Black campuses" (Bennett, p. 855). Additionally, HBCUs long have been recognized as an important educational resource for the African American community as well as a "key institution for promoting the well-being of African Americans" (Tobolowsky et al., 2005, p. 63).

From this research, Black educators have called upon scholars and researchers at PWIs to find ways to address the needs of students at HBCUs. This summons for research studies to explore the ethos at HBCUs appears not to recommend a return to segregated campuses but rather to find ways to replicate or expand the qualities of caring (Ladson-Billings, 2003; Tobolowsky et al., 2005; Valenzuela, 1999).

Against this background are the additional political, economic, sociodemographic, and technological trends that continue to pose threats to HBCUs. Unfortunately, today's picture reveals that financial woes and judicial assaults continue to shut down HBCUs. Such woes often coerce sinking colleges to merge with other HBCUs or with colleges that traditionally serve White students (National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, 2000). Over the last two decades, a dozen Black colleges have closed, and the list of HBCUs in trouble today—financially or otherwise—is long. From 2003–2004, two HBCUs lost accreditation, and two additional HBCUs were under review (B. Jones, Dean of Enrollment Management, personal communication, March 23, 2004). The tensions embraced by small HBCUs to maintain their accreditation serves partially to explain why some HBCUs cannot direct greater manpower and resources toward more

entrepreneurial thinking and innovative strategies for the 21st century (such as enhanced recruitment efforts and affirmation of Mexican American and Asian students and others).

Another reality for some HBCUs, beyond the anguish of financial and enrollment woes, is the "fear of losing too much Blackness" (Winbush, 2004, p. 35; also see S. Willie, 2003). In West Virginia, Bluefield State, while still officially classified as a HBCU, has a student body that is 96% White and no Black faculty. In a period of less than 20 years, Tennessee State University, Alabama A&M, and Jackson State University have been assaulted by a variety of court orders to desegregate their campuses. The three institutions were forced to classify White students as minority, to offer them scholarships, and to establish policies to effectively "deracinate" the settings. Many Black students balked, demonstrating against such actions. In 1993, a court-imposed stipulation said that Tennessee State University must be 50% White, which as of 2004 had not been achieved (Winbush). Yet, the Tennessee State University graduate school is 63% White, with a faculty and administration that are primarily White (Winbush). Throughout U.S. institutions of higher education, the changing racial climate is tempered by three trends: (a) growing opposition to affirmative action and civil rights era policies, (b) increasing demands for more multiethnic institutional changes, and (c) the changing racial ideologies that college students bring with them (Giroux, 1992; S. Willie, 2003).

The Black college experience. According to Banks (2001), McCormack and Robinson (2003), and Tobolowsky et al. (2005), the collective and mutual experiences of African Americans attending Black colleges reinforce their sense of shared Black identity and community. Thus, the term *Black College experience* denotes opportunities uniquely offered at HBCUs such as Black Scholars Competition, African American fraternities and

sororities, Black church relationships, and Black community activities. Although no written policies prevent others from joining, such entities are normalized as Black-students-only activities.

Although originally founded for Negro students, and while sustaining celebrations of Blackness and Black self-love, HBCUs are slowly embracing integration by opening doors to other races and nationalities (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; hooks, 2001). However, this openness does not necessarily signify readiness. Just because an institution is categorized as a minority-serving entity and just because a student is identified as African American or Hispanic does not guarantee the institution or student is multiculturally sensitized and supportive of difference. In 1988 in the United States, 63% of Blacks and 68% of Latinos attended segregated K–12 schools (meaning majority-Black schools or majority-Brown schools), and many believe U.S. schools are even more segregated today (Menchaca, 2001). Gloria and Castellanos (2003) and C. Willie and others (2006) commented that no matter where the college or university is located, most college students were raised in ethnically encapsulated environments, whether from rural areas, small towns, inner cities, or the suburbs. Therefore, college students, who through encapsulated school experiences have attained fears, myths, and stereotypes about Others, continue their encapsulation on the college campus, unless the campus culture provides new outlets to form diverse relationships (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). The reality is that students do not reside just in classrooms. Even students who commute to campus live within the environment—cafeteria, athletic field, and library—where they need support to engage in the learning process in a variety of ways (Moses, 2004).

Currently, most HBCUs face the significant challenge to simultaneously retain their mission and redefine it to better meet the needs of the multicultural student populations they serve (B. Jones, Dean of Enrollment Management, personal communication, July 14, 2005). This challenge is gravely felt by smaller, "lower tier" HBCUs (such as STU), those with no hefty endowments but that are enrollment and grants driven. Located in the corner of some minds are negative assumptions about these less competitive HBCUs; however, recent evidence supports the continuing value of Black colleges and provides a refreshed or new image. "African Americans who attend HBCUs demonstrate greater satisfaction with their college experience, academic achievement, and developmental gains when compared to those who attend predominately White institutions" (Minor, 2004, p. 40). Clearly, such statements merit further investigation to improve the experiences of Black students at PWIs. Significantly, I ask, why is there no mention of the satisfaction or opinions of Hispanics or Others who attend HBCUs? Ironically, leaders of HBCUs who claim openness to diversity do not acknowledge the presence or participation of Others in activities that are characteristic of a free and democratic society. In effect, the Mexican Americans exist as one of the invisible diversities. "There's not much published out there, but the people are there and they have their stories" (Moses, 2004). Being aware of such marginalization or denial of Others provokes a closer examination of the Black college experience.

Studies have found that an impressive percentage of Black students favor the Black college experience, but the underlying tensions with other concerns at HBCUs still directly affect student retention. To evaluate the strengths and problems at HBCUs, McCormack and Robinson (2003) reviewed three books, recently published, concerning

Blacks in higher education and racial differences in college student achievement. Their analysis revealed, "The highest attrition rates for college students are Black students at Black schools" (p. 22). The authors attributed attrition not only to student-reported complaints of poor living conditions, homesickness, and poor or nonchalant administration, but also—and primarily—to students entering HBCUs who are underprepared compared to their Black peers on White campuses. "Black students on Black campuses generally have poorer academic backgrounds" (McCormack & Robinson, p. 22). Clearly, there must be improved articulation between high schools and colleges as well as supportive, early remedial or developmental programs to help prepare all students. Additionally, McCormack and Robinson found that recent research has refuted negative connotations about HBCUs and in fact has shown that the patterns of intellectual development and social adjustment are positive for Black students in Black schools.

Recent studies have brought to light positive qualities about the Black college experience (Freeman, 2005; Moses, 2004; C. Willie et al., 2006; S. Willie, 2003). Essentially, HBCUs were found to provide for the intellectual development and the social adjustment of their students. These gains were shown for students at HBCUs despite the greater resources of PWIs. "Furthermore, the gains are supported by the evidence that there have been no differences in graduate school performance among black students from black and white colleges" (McCormack & Robinson, 2003, p. 7). With a hopeful tone, McCormack and Robinson concluded,

> It seems that the black colleges, instead of becoming an endangered species, may be discovered to be a real national resource. Rather than being phased out as obsolete when black students' educational opportunities may be said to have caught up with white students, it seems that the attitude instead should be a

> recognition of another part of the American experience which has important and timely insights to contribute to the welfare of the whole.…There may be a real need for sharing the minority experience of surviving, persisting, overcoming obstacles, and finding value in the self and others. (p. 22)

Banks (2003) noted the trend away from only first-generation students' enrolling in Black colleges toward more second- and-third generation participation. The Black community realizes that Black colleges not only have a

> distinguished record of academic excellence and a strong tradition of self-help [but] also, most middle-and-upper class African Americans want their children to know and to feel comfortable with other Blacks and with Black culture. Consequently, a number of middle-and upper-class African Americans encourage their children to attend historically Black colleges such as Fisk, Spelman, Morehouse, Howard, and Hampton. (Banks, 2003, p. 213)

Thus, it appears that Others are rethinking the validity of the Black college experience: "In theorizing about Black experience, we seek to uncover, restore, as well as to deconstruct so that new paths and different journeys are possible" (hooks, 1992, p. 172). However, in my readings and investigations, I located only limited mention of Hispanics or other ethnicities sharing the Black experience. The Black social political systems and Black institutions have not documented the new or expanding learning communities. As Moses (2004) surmised, "It's clear that part of the reason people don't change structures, is because they don't know what they want to change."

Afrocentrism and Black Studies programs. Of interest to this study is the gradual transition of segregated Black-centric education into more encompassing disciplines entitled Ethnic Studies, Multiculturalism, and African Diaspora. The Black Studies approach grew out of the civil rights movement that focused on goals like voting rights and school desegregation. Currently, however, Black Studies education is "complicated by deeper divisions within the black community, including class and ancestry" (F. R. Lee, 2003, p. 3). Over time, the multicultural movement has become encroached in

political battles, particularly the view that multiculturalism resides by and for the dominant order. Ladson-Billings (2004) reported that "corporate multiculturalism" manifests a veneer of diversity without any commitment to social justice or structural change: "Corporate multiculturalism constructs social reality in ways that promotes self-interest but rarely calls into question the ways White middle-class norms prevail" (p. 53). The newest trend, known as African Diaspora Studies, explores how Black identities are affected by national origin, ethnicity, and class, and includes studies of Blacks who identify themselves primarily as Hispanic or Caribbean. According to F. R. Lee (2003), "The new attention to Diaspora Studies is in large part a new way to bring Hispanic experiences into the African fold, a nod to the changing demographics" (p. 4). Precedence of diaspora teachings in the historical, anthropological, and sociological fields are locations where connections hold promise and need further exploration. A *New York Times* article's title drew immediate attention: "New Topic in Black Studies Debate: Latinos" (F. R. Lee, 2003). No longer just a trend, this movement toward inclusion of diaspora curricula provides evidence of intellectual contexts in which Blacks and Browns dialogue, "interrupting the black/white binary with a border race: brown" (Chabram-Dernersesian, 1997, p. 130).

Teacher preparation programs at HBCUs and STU. "There are institutional histories…including histories of schools of education" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 69). With the advent of HBCUs came the need to prepare teachers to serve Black communities and, after the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*, to serve the nation's desegregated public schools. Long lauded as teaching colleges, Black colleges boast a proud heritage highly instrumental in the elevation of African Americans. Currently, HBCUs serve only

a small percentage of Black students, with almost three fourths of Black college students now electing to attend PWIs (Bennett, 2004). The question arises: In an integrated society, is there a sustained need for the teacher preparation program at a HBCU? McCormack and Robinson (2003) quoted the script in Spike Lee's 1988 film, "School Daze," in which the Black college president counters the question about whether Black colleges have outlived their purpose: "That's absurd. The need does exist. It exists at Notre Dame, at Yeshiva and Brandeis, and at Brigham Young" (McCormack & Robinson, p. 7). Yes, the teacher preparation program at the HBCU can offer students an oasis in which to focus on academic excellence rather than distractions or marginalization sometimes felt at PWIs. Educator training programs at Black colleges can directly relate pedagogy and curricula to the teacher candidates' lives. Unique to Black colleges (and the teacher preparation programs at HBCUs) are the strengths, in terms of curriculum (Black literature, history, art, and music), teaching style and personal contact with teachers, social interaction among students and—at some Black colleges like STU—the Black church and service activities to help the Black community and the greater community. Also noteworthy is alumni support. Numerous former graduates who are employed teachers or retired educators continually seek opportunities to mentor the STU preservice teachers as well as to encourage them to join the Black educators organization and, above all, to procure employment.

As noted earlier, more than 50% of African American public school teachers have graduated from HBCUs—an impressive fact given that the 103 HBCUs represent just 3% of the nation's 4,084 institutions of higher learning (UNCF, 2004). Vital also is acknowledgement of the retention rate of African American teachers in public

classrooms, a higher retention rate as employed teachers than their White counterparts trained at PWIs (UNCF, 2004). Yet, what is the role of Black colleges in education? Where are their stories in research literature? What is the scholarship of teaching and learning at HBCUs?

Answers to these questions are conspicuously absent. Such gaps in the knowledge base are recognized by Hollins and Guzman (2005), by NLREP (2003), and by CORIBE (King, 2001). The CORIBE initiative in 1999 was sponsored by the AERA "to stimulate research, its dissemination and policy-making to improve education for and about people of African ancestry" (King, 2001, p. 4). The "epistemological crisis" has to do with what counts as knowledge, whose knowledge counts, and the research paradigms that conceptualize Black students as "disadvantaged" and "at risk" and that have the colonizing effects of Othering by placing them outside a normative standard (King, 2001, p. 10). CORIBE's central concern invites a transformative agenda to expand the range of epistemological perspectives that explore cultural development and community-building among teachers and the academy.

Recruitment of Hispanics for HBCU programs. McQueen and Zimmerman (2004) published an article in *The Association of Black Nursing Faculty Journal* entitled , "The Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the Inclusion and Education of Hispanic Nursing Students." Similar to prospects about a minority teacher shortage in public schools, the registered nurse population does not come close to mirroring minority populations in the United States. After highlighting the need for more minority nurses and for more diversity in nursing school populations, McQueen and Zimmerman presented their case to affirm that HBCU nursing programs are a "good fit" for Hispanic

students. They claimed it is not a coincidence that other minorities besides African Americans gravitate towards HBCUs for their nursing education. They explained that minority students seek education at an HBCU because the institution responds to the students' needs for special support services. Moreover, since support services are an integral part of an HBCU, benefiting all minority students, the programs are primed to assist minority students in overcoming the barriers of standardized testing. McQueen and Zimmerman concluded that within an HBCU, "more unites than divides the current and potential student body" (p. 7). Like Black students, Hispanic students face the challenges of effective recruitment and successful retention in higher education institutions. The challenges include social and racial stereotypes, teacher expectations, teacher–student interactions, the school culture, disciplinary action, and the fairness of testing accountability. The authors suggested that, unlike other academic institutions, HBCUs are communities where commonality of experience breeds a family-type learning environment. Such practice—as an ethic of care—is founded in the work of HBCUs. It was in this regard that McQueen and Zimmerman presented the recruitment of Hispanics as an ethical imperative of HBCUs.

Certainly, McQueen and Zimmerman's (2004) intent in conducting and publishing their research was similar to the purpose of this current study regarding how Mexican American/Hispanic teacher candidates describe their experiences and their perceptions within one HBCU in Texas. Although McQueen and Zimmerman did not fully discuss their research methodologies or theoretical framework, they, too, were rooted in the critical perspective. They sought to validate and uplift higher education opportunities provided by HBCU institutions to dignify the rights and place for Hispanic

students on HBCU campuses. Although McQueen and Zimmerman's research targeted nursing students, whereas this study focused on teacher candidates at a HBCU, both student populations share the goal to serve as health-care and education providers in the public or private sectors. As McQueen and Zimmerman explained, the ethic of care inherent in the founding work of HBCUs parallels the ethic of care expected of nurses—and of teachers.

McQueen and Zimmerman (2004) did not specify the authors' racial or ethnic identities or their relationship to the nursing students in their study. In contrast, in this study I believe I must foreground my positionality. Admittedly, my Whiteness perspective and position as critical researcher play a role in the questions pursued and the analyses determined. I agree, as McQueen and Zimmerman pointed out, that support services and testing barriers significantly impact students' college matriculation and future employment. I believe, nonetheless, that the barriers of testing and subsequent support services are just two aspects within the much larger stories of Mexican American/Hispanic preservice teachers. Thus, I plan to frame this study using the participants' perspectives.

Sojourner Truth University

Mexican American students at STU. Within both the general student populations at STU and its teacher education programs, Mexican Americans constitute 10%—a percentage that surely will rise, since Texas is now a majority-minority state. Whereas approximately 50% of the STU Mexican American students are recruited to participate in college sports, receive some financial assistance, and reside on campus, the remaining 50% of students live in the area and choose to commute. Historically, the Mexican

Americans at STU have ranged in age from 19 to 29, but recently older Mexican American adult learners have enrolled (NCES, 2003). Beyond statistical data and individual and team portraits of athletes published in the college alumni magazine, scarce information about Mexican American students attending STU is available. Beyond the STU Convocations Committee's sponsorship of poster displays and events to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and Cinco de Mayo, the Mexican Americans and students of multiracial heritages are "folded in" the assimilationist campus ideology. Many STU Hispanic students are active members in extracurricular activities (choir), athletic teams, and college organizations (student government and the Ambassadors Program); however, they are not recruited to join Black-only sororities and fraternities. Although during my 26-year tenure at STU, I have sometimes observed them included "in the fold," the value of their presence and contributions as Hispanic Americans is not formally acknowledged, and outreach programs to maximize their potential are not facilitated through institutional practices.

This type of invisible diversity, in which students' cultural, racial, or ethnic identifiers are not valued, provides evidence for colorblindness or assimilation ideologies. Although some teachers believe that these approaches are well meaning, both types of ideologies are culturally subtractive (Garcia, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999).

Believing that awareness of the problem is the first step toward any solution, this review of Hispanics' traversals in educational contexts and at STU begins a conversation to better inform the academy about prevalent subtractive practices propagated in schools and society. To reverse destructive practices, it will be helpful for HBCUs like STU to review and adopt the NLERAP principles that promote mentorship and political and

community action. These principles are quite similar to the tenets found in the CORIBE report (King, 2001) and similarly emphasize suggestions to improve democratic conditions for African Americans in society. To be sure, attitudes and actions of college officials and faculty must extend beyond the status quo acknowledgement of Hispanic students to fully promote and sustain affirmation of their presence and contributions on the HBCU campus.

First-generation college student and adult learner teacher candidates at STU. As is true with most other colleges, STU is striving to better address the needs of first-generation students and adult learners. For example, the STU teacher education program currently pilots a program to accelerate the undergraduate adult learner who seeks teacher certification. This program particularly appeals to teaching aides and teaching assistants who have gained practical experiences but have limited college education. Nonetheless, STU needs to give much more attention and provide more support to these adult students with unique needs. As numerous researchers (Ladson-Billings, 1991; Moses, 2004; Nieto, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999) have suggested, the institution can build on their unique experiences to help them move forward.

Undergraduate teacher preparation program at STU. Caught in the crossfire are the HBCUs' teacher education programs, which profess the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Nieto, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999) but in truth must enforce the state-mandated curriculum to assure that their prospective teachers pass all certification tests**.** At STU, teacher-educators cautiously and relentlessly persist in fulfilling state guidelines set by the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC), an entity that periodically makes site visits to check college offerings in education courses

and field experiences, the credentials of teaching faculty, and so on. One wise move taken by the college was the development of alternative certification and postbaccalaureate teacher programs, which opened the teacher preparation courses to graduates from STU and many other universities. These programs have increased greatly the percentages of teacher candidates at STU, and their college graduates have faced fewer hardships passing the state licensure tests. As a result, the STU teacher education program currently receives approval by the state. For the purpose of this study, though, investigation will focus on the traditional program, undergraduate teacher candidates, and their specific needs.

Teacher candidates are educated by program approval regulations (Ladson-Billings, 2004) and trained in the schools with curriculum that grows increasingly prescriptive while ignoring or "discrediting the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to the classroom" (Garcia, 2004, p. 502). Similar to other colleges and universities, the STU teacher education program promotes "normalizing practices that maintain the status quo" (Cary, 2001, p. 405) "through a curriculum where White is normative and adversity issues are addressed shallowly" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004, p. 494). As Sleeter and Delgado-Bernal (2004) explained, "When teachers teach what they believe are universals, they draw from European and Euro-American culture and experience" (p. 251). Critical race theorists have uncovered ways that pedagogy is racialized and selectively offered to students based on the setting (Ladson-Billings, 2004).

On a positive note, connections between the STU teacher education program and the local community are established through tutorial reading partnerships in the public schools and service learning projects at charitable agencies and churches. Such

experiences open opportunities for teacher candidates to understand the structural underpinnings of inequity and to deal with racial and diversity issues (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004). Upon graduation, STU teacher candidates have no problems procuring teaching positions, and approximately 25% begin postgraduate studies after 2 years of employment, according to the 2004 STU *Fact Book*. The tracking of HBCU teachers indicates that they are assigned most frequently to positions in urban schools designated by the state as low performing, in lower curriculum classes (not teaching honors or gifted students), or in special education classes (remedial or tutorial programs). Black and Latino teachers are overrepresented in segregated, failing urban schools, in which the teachers inherit lower salaries, less instructional resources, less community involvement support, high faculty turnover, and high student dropout rates (Valenzuela, 1999). There is lack of evidence for long-term impact of institutional strategies or how school structures and organization mediate later teacher-student learning (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004).

Implications of Literature Review for Study

Anchored in the CRT perspective, this review of literature has investigated an extensive range of constructs. To explore the high demand for quality teachers as linked to the emerging Hispanic student populations in higher education, this review has built broadly on the contributions of numerous scholars, including Villenas (1996), Valdes (1996), Castellanos and Jones (2003), MacDonald (2004), Banks and Banks (2003, 2004), Gutierrez (2004), Suarez-Orozco et al. (2004), and Zumwalt and Craig (2005). I have borrowed the constructs of *situated, endangered*, and *enduring selves* from Spindler and Hammond (2000). To take a closer look at dimensions affecting the climate for

diversity in an institution, according to Romo and Falbo (1996), Hurtado and Kaminura (2003), Valencia (2002), and Pizarro (2005), one must consider the institution's historical legacy; systemic organization; demographics representation; psychological climate; and behavioral and relational aspects among faculty, staff, administrators, and students—all of which influence the persistence of Latino/as in educational attainment.

While CRT has become the mainstay, critical pedagogy and borderlands consciousness have developed as pillars in the study's analytic framework. By investigating the scholarship and leadership of Tate (1997, 1999), Ladson-Billings (1999, 2004), Villenas et al. (1999), Cary (2001, 2006), and Sleeter and Delgado-Bernal (2004), this study is positioned to address CRT goals of class and race equity and social justice within educational practices. CRT is a process-making transformation, a form of cultural praxis (Banks, 1994, 2001, 2003; Freire, 1968; Hidalgo, 1999; hooks, 1994; King, 2001; Nieto, 1996, 2002, 2004). With respect to critical pedagogy, the leading educators support a bicultural, not a binary, empowerment of community, where students' knowledge is valued and students do not have to choose one racial or ethnic identity over another (Greene, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001, 2003, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). Providing cultural knowledge foundations means teaching multiple perspectives and countertruths through narratives and literature, the arts, and popular culture (Anzaldua, 1999; Eisner, 1991; Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992; Greene, 1996). While becoming aware of a pedagogy of difference, students feel neither exoticized nor demonized and are better able to take responsibility for their beliefs and actions (Banks, 2003; Cummins, 1996; Freire, 1968; Leistyna et al., 1996; Pinar et al., 2000). Intertwined in critical pedagogical actions are relationships between knowledge and power (Apple, 1997; Aronowitz &

Giroux, 1991; Cary, 2006; Foucault, 1977/1995; McLaren, 2003; Nieto, 2001, 2002, 2004; Omni, 2001).

Evidence is strong that this study should follow the lead of numerous scholars who have advanced the relational aspects of social and cultural capital (Freeman, 2005; Freire, 1968; Giroux, 1992; McLaren, 2003; Nieto, 2002; Pizarro, 2005; Villenas, 1996, 2000; C. Willie et al., 2006), double consciousness (DuBois, 1905/1994; Grant, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2004, 2005; S. Willie, 2003), and borderlands consciousness (Anzaldua, 1999, 2002; Delgado-Bernal, 1999; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Elenes, 2003; Villenas, 1996, 2000). According to Anzaldua (1999, 2001) and McKenna (2003), border consciousness emphasizes an ever-changing state of belonging and not belonging, comfort and distance: a geographical and psychological terrain of multiplicity, ambiguity, and creativity. By fusing the ideologies of critical pedagogy and Latino/a CRT, Giroux (1992) proposed border pedagogy as a tool for cultural workers to reform "the sites of teacher education, public schools, higher education, and certain aspects of community education" (p. 1).

Implicated in the chasms and rhetoric of diversity and democracy are HBCUs and their teacher education programs. While HBCUs continue to honor the richness of their mission, many of the smaller colleges are struggling to sustain financially stability and to harness their assets to attract a greater market share of college-eligible students (NCES, 2003). These colleges continue to serve a purpose, but they are among the most impaired by the changing marketplace (June, 2003). To better consider the past, present, and future presence of HBCUs and the influence on the Black community, this review of literature has connected to the scholarship of Haymes' (2003) urban Black struggles and a

pedagogy of place to hooks' (1990, 1992, 1994, 2000, 2003a, 2003b) loving Blackness and homeplace.

Since the 1960s, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded in teacher education has decreased for African Americans at nearly twice the rate of White teacher education graduates. These data, however, do not accurately portray the trends of all minority teacher candidates, because Asian and Hispanic preservice teachers often were not recorded as separate populations from Whites. Nevertheless, the trend shows an ever-widening gap in the decrease in teachers of Color and increase in students of Color in public schools (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Teacher education programs at HBCUs have prepared over 50% of the African Americans teachers teaching today in U.S. schools (Bennett, 2004; UNCF, 2004), but, again, data do not portray the numbers of non-Black teachers presently teaching who graduated from HBCUs. Clearly, HBCU-teacher education programs have a demonstrated commitment to excellence and a strong tradition of self-help (King, 2001, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2001, 2003, 2005), but in accomplishing these tasks, they have failed to document their diverse or expanding learning communities (Moses, 2004). Answers to questions about non-Black students, specifically teacher candidates, at HBCUs are conspicuously absent.

Joining Ellsworth (1989, 1992, 1997), along with McIntosh (1989), Cary (2001, 2006), Lather (1991, 2000), Scheurich (1993, 2002), and Sleeter (1994), through this study I planned to expand insights for building a theoretical base *within and against Whiteness*. Unlike other contemporaries, as an older female White educator, I have for 26 years prepared teacher candidates for licensure at a HBCU. At STU, teacher candidates

are predominantly African Americans and Mexican Americans who, would benefit from the ensuing critical pedagogical actions. Aided by two colleagues' perspectives and readings of similar self-critiques, I began to question how the norm of Whiteness has influenced this research study and to reflect upon realizations that ultimately will alter or modify my own teaching practices. In the views of Roman (1993), Villenas (1996), and Ladson-Billings (2001), I understand that I should represent myself as an insider-outsider, participant-observer to challenge educational systems where normalized knowledge serves to maintain asymmetrical relations.

Open to scrutiny throughout the literature review has been both the absence of understandings about Latino/as enrolled at HBCUs and the scarcity of information about teacher education programs at HBCUs. Juxtaposed to these shortages is the proliferation of dominant Western society's views that drive educational policy (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2003). In summary, there is no precedent or prototype found that emulates the current study to explore the perspectives and experiences of Mexican Americans at a HBCU. Hence, it became apparent that the study participants and I might serve as border crossers by revealing their perspectives and experiences at STU.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

> The way educational research is conducted contributes greatly to what happens [and does not happen] in schools.
> Dolores Delgado-Bernal

To assure a safer test drive, it is best to look under a car's hood to understand the engine's design. Indeed, as Delgado-Bernal (1999, p. 301) indicated in the above quote, it is wise to deliberate the research design and implementation that drives schooling. Explanations in chapter 3 anchor this multiple case study in the critical paradigm and then illuminate the critical tradition, conceptual framework, setting, participants, research design, and methods. The research design and approaches were deemed appropriate to assure ethics and quality in studying 7 Mexican American preservice teachers' introspections about their experiences at a HBCU.

Theoretical Framework

"What qualitative research is and what it is not, is fundamentally epistemological" (Stake, 2006, p. 2). Epistemological issues focus on "ways of being and how we know what we know—specifically, how we know Others" (Cary, 2006, p. 15). This qualitative study was anchored in the critical or social constructivist paradigm (Cary, 2006) in which meaning is not discovered but constructed as human beings engage in the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 1998). The study was conducted at a Black university with the intent to conceptualize Mexicano/Latino culture as an asset rather than as a characteristic to be assimilated or ignored. In using a multiple case study approach, the focus centered on 7 teacher candidates who had demonstrated success in educational attainment at one HBCU. This investigation was designed to analyze how underlying socioeconomic and

cultural issues within a Black college setting are preserved, enhanced, or shortchanged at the expense of Others.

Critical Paradigm

Seeds of the critical paradigm as a "discourse of resistance and possibility" were developed by Frankfurt School theorists in Germany 75 years ago, with the intent to disrupt and challenge the status quo (McLaren, 2003). The term *critical* is not just a criticism or complaint, but is the unmasking of beliefs and practices that limit human freedom and democracy (Glesne, 1999). Critical schooling and critical research were developed to link the microdynamics of school curriculum, policies, and practices to larger issues of societal relations outside the institution. What distinguishes critical tradition is the insistence on grounding practice in ideological clarity that explicitly critiques forms of collective oppression. Noncritical orientations do not address power relations (Crotty, 1998; Pizarro, 2005; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). Implicit within critical schooling and research is the urgency to foreground power relations, address social injustices, and nurture transformations that lead to a more egalitarian and democratic social order.

Although a paradigm is a conceptual map or guide, it is important to note that critical tradition, the critical way-of-knowing, is always changing and evolving. Critical researchers must defamiliarize their perception of the world in a way that challenges what appears natural and questions what appear obvious. Criticalists focus on groups that are marginal to the dominant culture and living within asymmetrical power relations. Criticalists investigate ways in which lived experiences may be distorted by ideology, often involving study participants as coresearchers to combine education, investigation,

and action (Glesne, 1999). The familiar, routine, or mundane must be contested in such a way that students along with the researcher are able to reassess power relations within what have been taken-for-granted attitudes and experiences. Scheurich (2002), however, warned that criticalists "are very good at criticizing the inequitable world" (p. 52) without attending to the nature of subjectivity, which reproduces the inequitable status quo. Above all, racism creates significant negative effects in the lives of people of Color within schools and the greater society. Hence, scholars of Color developed CRT as an oppositional discourse to critical theory with the intent to place race at the center of analysis (Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2003, 2004; Tate, 1997, 1999; Taylor, 1999).

Interwoven Conceptual Perspectives

In Ellsworth's (1992) opinion, more frightening than the unknown or unknowable are educational projects that legitimize actions "on the basis of a single master discourse or theoretical framework" (p. 112). Upon Ellsworth's advice, for this project I drew extensively from three frameworks: (a) CRT (Banks, 1994; Cary, 2001, 2006; Cummins, 1996; DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; Delgado-Bernal, 1999; Foley, 2002; Freire, 1968; Hidalgo, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 1999, 2004; McLaren, 1999, 2003; Nieto, 2001; Scheurich, 1993; Tate, 1997; Villenas, 1996, 2000; Villenas et al., 1999), (b) critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1992; Goldstein, 1997, 1998; Greene, 1996; Guajardo & Guajardo, 2002; Leistyna et al., 1996; McLaren, 2003; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999), and (c) borderlands consciousness (Anzaldua, 1999; 2001; Delgado-Bernal, 1999; Elenes, 2003; McKenna, 2003; Nieto, 2001; Pugh et al., 2000; Villenas, 1996, 2000). My purpose in utilizing three theoretical perspectives was to examine the multiple perceptions and experiences of Mexican American teacher candidates as they negotiated

the Black college. Specifically, the CRT lens was crucial to naming the intersectionality of oppression and "diverse gendered" and "classed racisms" that many people confront since race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and class oppressions cannot be separated when analyzing people of Color (Calderon & Carreon, 2000; King, 2001; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Villenas et al., 1999).

I chose CRT because it "reflects the values of reciprocity, mutuality, and truth-telling—the uncensored *liberated space*"—through which opportunities exist to affirm the voices and perceptions of those who share a commitment to survival and advancement of people of Color (King, 2001, p. 5). To encourage such dialogue across contemporary critical traditions, criticalists expanded CRT to include complimentary branches such as multicultural feminism, multicultural and antiracist education, disability studies, critical pedagogy, Asian consciousness, border pedagogy, Latino/a CRT (also known as La Fronteras or borderlands consciousness), and Black transformative research (better known as CORIBE). Although all have a similar genealogy, each "second-generation" branch of scholarship tenders unique contributions and limitations. At the theoretical level, these variant and sometimes oppositional branches place different emphases on structure versus agency (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004).

For this multiple case study about Mexican American teacher candidates, the conceptual framework was first stabilized with CRT and next complemented by the richness and tensions of critical pedagogy and borderlands consciousness. Whereas critical pedagogy focuses more on structures of information and social systems, borderlands consciousness targets agency. At times, since these perspectives overlap and complement the other, they have been fused together as border pedagogy (Giroux, 1992).

Critical pedagogy represents a montage of methods that challenge systems that serve to maintain asymmetrical social relations. Critical pedagogy mainly emphasizes strategies of questioning how knowledge is individually constructed and how institutions legitimize one form or domain of knowledge over another (Ovando & McLaren, 2000). Above all, critical pedagogy focuses on intersections of oppression and foregrounds tensions of social class and the culture of everyday life (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). Similar to other discourses about marginality, borderlands consciousness addresses philosophical questions, focusing on the notion of border/mestiza/o identity and the reconceptualization of methodologies (Elenes, 2003).

Scholars have taken issue with CRT and critical pedagogy by pointing out that these views and assumptions clash with perceptions of indigenous groups. In particular, critics have faulted White-biased, essentialized identities (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). Critics argue that essentialist views of identity are simplistic and do not allow for the complexity of experiences that shape who we are and what we know. In effect, essentialism reduces the lives of people to simple addition problems (1 + 1 + 1 = 3) rather than analyzing to problem solve how multiple forms of oppression intensify their hardships (Elenes, 2003).

To counter problems of Whiteness and White dominance, border consciousness emerged. Elenes (2003) and Darder et al. (2003) have argued that people of Color must articulate theory for themselves, recognizing language as the key tool in the development of consciousness and voice. *Borders identity*, originally constructed by Anzaldua (1999, 2001), has been developed to lead toward an understanding about the synergy of Chicano/a/Mexicana/o/American dual subjectivities. Since inception, many have written

about the metaphor of border crossing to characterize multicultural dynamics (Elenes, 2003; McKenna, 2003; Pugh et al., 2000). Although there is much to recommend about the use of such a term, care must be taken to connect the identity of border crosser to an agent of change for social justice, democracy, and egalitarian community building (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998). Borders have become sites in which to interrogate benefits of cultural layers as cultural brokers negotiate the contexts of differences. By shifting theoretical perspectives to better analyze this multiple case study, I, too, became a border crosser—not as a nomad or wanderer, but as an agent of social change, working to open opportunities for new stories and diverse understandings to emerge.

Setting for the Research Study

Repeatedly, critics bemoan research in teacher education programs characterized by lack of attention to the contexts in which the prospective teachers are embedded (Pinar et al., 2000; Grossman, 2005). It is, therefore, important to examine situational uniqueness, especially the complexity of participants' interactions with location and program conditions. Instead of causally determined, the qualitative researcher must view the participants' comments and action, "especially the problematic ones" as multicontextual (via historical, cultural, economic, political, ethical, aesthetic, social, and physical contexts) (Stake, 2006, p. 12).

STU

As is the case with most institutions of similar origin, STU was born of the need to provide quality education for African Americans following the Civil War, continuing this focus until *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, KS., et. al.* in 1954. Since

then, STU, along with other HBCUs, gradually has embraced integration, opening doors to other races and nationalities while sustaining celebrations of Blackness and Black self-love (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; hooks, 2001). STU has thrived, and at other times barely survived, for over 100 years in central Texas. With close proximity to six other institutions of higher education, STU is a 4-year college serving a relatively small student body of 700 students. Besides Anglos, African Americans, Asians, and Middle Eastern populations, the Austin metropolis boasts a long-established Hispanic population, in addition to a recent surge in Latino/a immigration to the area. According to the *Austin American Statesman*, Austin ranks 19th among the nation's top Hispanic markets with a population of 471,700 Hispanics (Gallaga & MacLaggan, 2006, p. A12). As reported in chapter 2 of this study, no enrollment data were initially kept at STU concerning the school's first Mexican American students. Yet, Latinos have always been a noticeable part of the STU student population and a part of my classes, since I was first hired in 1979.

STU remains in "good standing" with the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities after surviving a 2002–2003 year of review concerning its marginal financial reserves. Of interest to alumni, faculty, students, and financiers is the fact that STU's fiscal stability depends on only 30% revenue from student enrollment, with the remainder arising from other multiple sources (B. Jones, Dean of Enrollment Management, personal communication, March 23, 2004). Upon review of enrollment percentages by ethnicity at nearby PWI institutions and regional HBCUs, STU attracts smaller percentages of Hispanic and Asian American students than other local colleges in the area, but higher percentages than other HBCUs in the region (NCES, 2003). See Table 1.

Table 1

Ethnic Composition of Students in Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Austin, Texas, 2003

School	Black	Asian	Hispanic	White	Other
School 1: Sojourner Truth University	77%	1%	7%	10%	5%
School 2	7%	6%	22%	60%	5%
School 3	6%	1%	15%	66%	12%
School 4	94%	0%	3%	1%	2%

Across Texas, numerous universities are recognizing Hispanics as an increasing part of America's future, because by 2020, Texans of college-eligible age will be majority Hispanic (Garcia, 2004; also cited in the STU 2003 Strategic Plan). In 2003, The University of Texas at El Paso, at San Antonio, and Pan American claimed substantial Hispanic enrollments (ranging from 11,226 to 13,771 students), and the 2004 Hispanic population was 4,822 students at Texas State University. Yet, Embry (2006) explained that if a proposed recruiting plan succeeds, "one in four students at Texas State University will be Hispanic" (p. B3). The Texas State University president explained that this "enrollment goal could bring grants and would benefit society," and if all goes as planned, "Texas State University will become the largest four-year Hispanic–serving institution in the state" (Embry, 2006, B1). To benefit the future, these data merit consideration if STU plans to competitively recruit the diverse student population it professes to honor within its mission statement.

Although STU has begun initiatives to attract Hispanic students, the efforts are not as competitive or well funded as are the recruiting efforts by many of the PWIs (B.

Jones, Dean of Enrollment Management, personal communication, March 23, 2004). STU's full-time faculty sees little turnover, and in comparison to the student population, the STU 2003 *Fact Book* states that the faculty is comprised 48% Black, 4% Hispanic, 40% White, and 8% Asian American. Not surprisingly, STU's tuition and fees are higher than those at local public institutions but also considerably lower than those at local private institutions, "suggesting STU is a good value in resident liberal arts education," according to the STU 2003 Strategic Plan. On the other hand, STU's tuition and fees are higher than those at other private Texas HBCUs, suggesting that STU may lose some admission prospects to the other HBCUs.

Teacher Education Program and Research at STU

In explaining flaws and oversights found in recent research studies about the professional development of teacher educators, Zeichner and Conklin (2005) argued, "The programs themselves need to be described and studied in a way that acknowledges their complexity and their ties to the settings in which they are located and the people that inhabit them" (p. 699). To fulfill Zeichner and Conklin's request, as a long-standing professor at STU, I am challenged to present a balanced account of the teacher education program as the setting, the site, of the proposed research. As at any small, underfunded institution of higher learning, the best-and-the-not-good shapes and is shaped by the practices and ideologies in the teacher education program at STU.

Strikingly different from preparation programs at PWIs, the racial, cultural, and linguistic profiles of the diverse STU teacher candidate population—coupled with seemingly continuing disparities of working-class backgrounds and inferior earlier schooling—should be highlighted as the pressing issues for practice, policy, and research.

Contrary to the trend at other teacher preparation programs where "*diversity* is used as a euphemism in an attempt to soften racism" (Nieto, 2002, p. 183), diversity at STU refers to the range of differences that encompass, race, ethnicity, gender, social class, ability, and language.

It is critical to ask whether the teacher education program itself is a model of what it espouses. At STU, diversity is constructed not as a deficit but as an asset (Ladson-Billings, 1998), especially within the teacher education program. Yet, ambivalence lingers. Seemingly of two minds across the campus, African American traditions are well celebrated, but ignored or merely acknowledged are the needs of minority language learners and the interests of college students of other ethnic heritages. Although only a few language minority students are presently enrolled at STU, and none in the teacher education department, little is put into place to support their education. If queried, STU administrators respond that there are no bilingual education course offerings in teacher education because of cost constraints due to low student enrollment. True to Nieto's (2002) beliefs, however, more than the teaching of specific skills in bilingual education, the STU teacher education professors strive to help teacher candidates to develop positive attitudes to affirm language minority students and learners of other ethnic origins in the public school classrooms. In opposition to assimilationist teaching, the teacher education program faculty strives to enact culturally relevant pedagogy, allowing students to choose both academic success and maintenance of their own cultural identities (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

At STU, the identified 87 preservice teachers all rely on financial loan assistance to pursue a major in Teacher Education via interdisciplinary studies, history,

mathematics, music, kinesiology, English, biology, special education, or EC-4 Generalist. By and large, the preservice teachers are prepared under the auspices of a generalized core curriculum and program coursework specifically guided by the competencies in the Texas Educator Certification Examinations (TExES). With the exception of faculty-imbued emphasis on multicultural education and culturally responsive instruction, the coursework in teacher preparation emphasizes the state-directed "universal knowledge base for teaching, learning, and schooling" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004, p. 932). These efforts are intended both to support and challenge the idea of the traditional knowledge by including voices traditionally excluded (Asante, 1991; hooks, 1994, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999). Two characteristics distinguishing the teacher education program at STU are classes with small professor-to-student ratios and strategic internship-practice in the public schools based on the premise that good teachers learn their profession from quality teachers (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Through personalized advising and mentorship, the teacher education program faculty strives to articulate program offerings, clarify and monitor admissions standards, and support a strong induction program in order to provide an effectively prepared teaching force.

Collegiality and stability distinguish the faculty of the undergraduate teacher education community at STU, which includes the chairperson, three full-time professors, and three adjunct professors. Of the one male and six female faculty members, two hold PhDs, two are graduate students in their final dissertation semester, one holds a master's degree in Technology Instruction, and the remaining two adjunct faculty are public school teachers with master's degrees in Education Curriculum. Demographically, the teacher education program faculty includes four African Americans, two Anglos, and one

Hispanic—all of whom are 45 years or older. Good or bad, the tenure of this faculty is remarkable. Besides the recent addition of one full-time faculty member since the chair of the teacher education program moved to the position of academic dean, the remaining six full-time and part-time teacher education program professors have served at STU 12–26 years. Such longevity provides constancy but lacks injections, such as the utilization of popular culture from more youthful teacher-educators.

Accountability ratings designate the teacher education program at STU as a "Recognized Program," which means first-time test takers on the TExES have aggregated scores of 90% or better. This achievement is not a taken-for-granted tale of triumph or victory narrative. In contrast to most PWIs receiving a similar rating in Texas, this ranking comes only after intense efforts to professionalize teacher education at STU, to infuse testing tips throughout coursework, and to offer intense tutorials. From year to year, the intensity of these endeavors can never wane, because each wave of new teacher candidates reintroduces academic challenges, particularly in content-specific areas. Notable is the fact that upon graduation, almost 100% of STU graduates procure teaching positions, and even more impressive, the retention and satisfaction rate is very high (B. Jones, Dean of Enrollment Management, personal communication, March 23, 2004; also cited in the STU 2003 College Bulletin).

Considered the "strongest" department on the STU campus (B. Jones, Dean of Enrollment Management, personal communication, July 14, 2005; also cited in fieldnotes from interviews with a participant), the teacher education faculty strives to uphold rigorous standards while enacting a family approach to care for students. One benefit is that most education classes are scheduled in the same building, which helps create a

community context to sustain and support prospective teachers learning the knowledge base for teaching (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Over the years, grant monies from the Texas HBCUs Consortium and SBEC have endowed the STU teacher education program with advanced technology equipment and instructional resources. Additionally, when teacher candidates meet the standards for admittance into the program, they receive financial subsidies via Teach for Texas grant funds.

Beyond campus and individual concerns of teacher candidates, the relationships of the STU teacher preparation program to the local community and immediate neighborhood schools are piecemeal rather than comprehensively connected. Although linked, the relationship remains only a thread among STU, other HBCUs, and international diasporas. In sum, the teacher education program discourse at STU, formerly worthy of merit by having enhanced the training of numerous preservice teachers, has become ingrained and institutionalized, with shortcomings (in curriculum, research, and recruitment) that do not give full attention to meeting the challenges of the 21st century, particularly changes from minority-majority-Black to minority-majority-Brown populations in Texas and the United States.

Participants

At the time of this study, during spring and summer semesters of 2005, the 7 teacher candidates asked to participate were the only Hispanics who had fulfilled requirements to take the professional-block courses in the teacher education program at STU. Even though other Hispanic students had identified themselves as education majors at STU, for the purpose of this study, only designated junior- and senior-level candidates were asked to participate. Beyond enrollment in day or evening campus courses, these

particular preservice teachers either spent 2–4 hours per week as interns or were full-day student teachers in the public schools. Prior to this study, all 7 participants were students in at least two of the six education courses I teach. As juniors and seniors, they are on schedule to graduate from December 2005 to May 2007. Typically, student teaching is completed in the first semester of the 5th year. However, 5 of the 7 study participants required a longer time to matriculate through the program because of outside family and work responsibilities.

In this study, all 7 participants were first-generation college students. The ages of the 4 women and 3 men were widely distributed from 23 years to 54 years of age. Such a distribution of ages is noteworthy because the age of nontraditional college students is increasing, especially among older adults making career-changing decisions to become certified teachers. The distinctiveness of these 7 individuals, and unique variations as revealed in their stories, emerged as they adapted to different conditions at the institution (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These students pursued teacher certification in one of the following areas: History, Special Education, EC-4 Generalist, or Physical Education.

The participant profile for this study aligns with data that reveal school choice among Latino/a students generally depends on the institution's proximity to their families (Tobolowsky et al., 2005). In the study, 6 participants always have resided in Central Texas, where STU is located. The 7th participant's hometown is located in South Texas. (With a tinge of regret, I note that no participants were from towns bordering Mexico along the Rio Grande River. In the past, Hispanic teacher candidates at STU who originated from border towns have contributed unique insights and experiences to class

conversations. Thus, I believe students from the borders would have expanded or provided different perspectives.)

Participation in this study was voluntary. The 7 teacher candidates held the right to refuse, a right I very much respected. The Consent Study Form explained there would be no repercussions if they were unable to participate. I highly respected their inherent responsibilities in pursuing a degree, working full-time jobs, and caring for family members. I did not intend to conduct research that would jeopardize the preservice teachers' successes or the reputations of the program and institution. I followed Lather's (2000) lead to find the failures, to help right the wrongs, and to help all of us become agents for change. I endeavored to preserve the integrity of the participants and the integrity requisite for this study and for the institution.

Participating Colleagues

Two STU colleagues directly responded to my queries and critiqued my writings in this study. They are an African American woman who teaches multicultural education courses and a White woman who promotes social justice through statewide public policy efforts, in teaching History courses, and through her own research. Since these colleagues are vocal in their separate fights against discrimination, they willingly joined my effort to contemplate changing demographics and changing practices on the STU campus. Notably, the two colleagues monitored my underlying concern about disparaging influences of Whiteness in this study. Besides direct member checking and written critiques, the colleagues kept involved through e-mail communications and informal exchanges. Their role was vital in guiding this investigation, reading preliminary drafts, and forwarding my actions.

Methodology

To lessen confusion in terminology, two definitions add clarity. *Methodology* is the plan of action or process undergirding the choice as well as linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes. *Methods* are the techniques used to gather and analyze data. In this project, the qualitative case study was the methodology. The case study served as the research design in guiding the choice of methods and in shaping the use of methods (Crotty, 1998). In contemplating the research design,

> we need to put considerable effort into answering two questions in particular. First, what methodologies and methods will we be employing in the research? ...Second, how do we justify this choice and use of methodologies and methods? (Crotty, 1998, p. 2)

The issue within the first question lies with how methodology governs choice and use of methods. The response to the second question lies with fulfilling the purpose of the research question: How do Mexican American/Hispanic teacher candidates describe their experiences and what are their perceptions within one HBCU located in Texas? This is followed by the next question: Why should readers take the research process (outcomes) seriously? Throughout this study, the interest was "in *process* rather than outcomes, in *context* rather than a specific variable, in *discovery* rather than confirmation" (Merriam, 2001, p. 19).

Ethnographic Study

In the spirit of critical inquiry, this research study sought to uncover meanings and perceptions on the part of 7 teacher candidates, viewing understandings against the backdrop of their overall worldview (Crotty, 1998; Merriam, 2001). It is important to view a case as an integrated system that requires studying "the experience of real cases

operating in real situations" (Stake, 2006, p. 3). Emphasis is placed on characterization of the program or context and the perceptions of people in that situation. For further credibility as a case study, there must be a finite number of participants or a finite amount of time during which research is conducted (Stake). Thereby, this study was conducted during the spring and summer semesters of 2005, and the descriptions and analyses involved one single unit—the 7 Mexican American/Hispanic teacher candidates who were identified as juniors and seniors in the teacher education program at STU.

In line with this critical inquiry, as the principal researcher, I strove to see things from the viewpoint of the participants, keeping in mind the interview should be less about the researcher and more about the person. Furthermore, content trumps method, meaning the substance of knowledge gathered is more important than the technique of interview. As opposed to the *etic*, or outsider's view, this researcher stance is at times referred to as the *emic*, or insider's perspective (Merriam, 2001). In qualitative research, the investigator is

> the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data and as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information. Conversely…human instruments are as fallible as any other type of research instrument. (Merriam, 2001, p. 20)

My Positionality

As a White, older, female professor teaching in a HBCU, I am situated by race, class, and gender within historical, cultural, and social discourses. Yet, I am aware that "being within a particular language, culture, and historical moment, can't exist within logics that drive toward universality, totality, certainty, and unity" (Ellsworth, 1999, p. 31). For this study, and in my work, I continue to deliberate how racial and cultural differences within and across communities form variant perspectives. Ellsworth (1999)

affirmed, “Ironically for educators (who problematize positionality), there is power and positive productivity in finding and putting to use the limits of one’s own knowledge” (p. 31). Thus, my aim was to not fall into the trap of believing I could fully know others, because I can never fully know others, and even what I know, I cannot fully represent (Collins, 2000; Lather, 1991).

Whiteness Methodologies

At this juncture, the discussion of methodology calls for me, the researcher, to shed light on my own roles as researcher, participant, and observer. Prior to beginning the larger study of how Mexican American teacher candidates describe their experiences at one HBCU, I conducted a preliminary, but now ongoing, project to examine my biases and power imbalances in class and privilege relations. Specifically, I investigated value orientations related to my complicity in White racism.

“The process of re-interpretation is a key element both of race cognizance and of developing antiracist practices… practice is ultimately more significant than identity in determining one’s relationship to systems of domination” (Frankenberg, 1993, pp. 162, 182). For self-interrogation I have gleaned much help and insights from critical, feminist, and postmodern scholars (Ellsworth, 1992; Frankenberg, 1993; Hurtado & Stewart, 1997; Scheurich 1993). My thrust was not redemption (Roman, 1997) but rather to problematize how Whiteness silences, disrupts, or assails students, colleagues, and those persons whom I touch through everyday interactions (Banks & Banks, 2003; hooks, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 2003, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas, 1996, 2000).

Safeguards for Ethics and Quality

Knowledge gained in research "faces hazardous passage from writer to reader. The writer needs ways of safeguarding the trip" (Stake, 1994, as cited in Merriam, 2001, p. 201). From the start and along the way, a researcher must assure preservation of ethics, trustworthiness, and validity in design, implementation, analysis, and writing integrity. Otherwise, the message received may misrepresent the message sent.

Through processes of research design, implementation, analyses, and writing, we rethink, manipulate, and represent our endeavors, drawing upon our own ideas of what data reveals (Coffey, 1999). Within these efforts, I remain vigilant in guarding closely related concerns: ethics, crisis of representation, trustworthiness and validity, catalytic validity, and triangulation. Although these forces will be presented as separate discussions, they share common characteristics and in research endeavors, should not be separated in research endeavors.

Ethics

Research and pedagogical actions that avoid asking students to question school and society are not, as is commonly supposed, ethically grounded or politically neutral. Such circumstances cut off the students' development as critical thinkers about their world today and tomorrow (Giroux, 1992; Shor & Pari, 1999). In the interest of justice, ethical education is a continued engagement: "Questions of ethics are particularly salient to the consequences, dissemination and publishing of our research" (Coffey, 1999, p. 74).

Foremost, the researcher's ethical duty is to the persons "researched." The task is to present their positions accurately while recognizing and enforcing boundaries of privacy. I am dealing with each person's honor and reputation—and also, my own. There

can be no separation of ethics and action (Pinar et al., 2000). The researcher's job is to distill the essence through balance and brevity (Zinser, 1998)

All questions of research are rooted in ethics. What gives me the right to tell another's story? What are my obligations to each person? To what extent can I cut or juggle words? Cary (2006) further questioned the unexpected or difficult stories that do not provide connections with, or fit comfortably into, anticipated themes and sociocultural contexts. To address this problem, Scheurich (1993) urged researchers to contextualize meanings in the "local moment" where the circumstance may be "conflict rather than collaboration, separation rather than unity, unknowing rather than knowing" (p. 110). In these cases, ethics is equated to honesty and discretion.

From the beginning, the act of research is relegated to character. If one's values and character are sound, the analyses and writings are more likely to be sound. "It all begins with intention. Intention is what we wish to accomplish. Call it the writer's soul" (Zinser, 1998, p. 263-264). Even so, Carspecken (2002), among other scholars, adopted the principled position that research value-orientation should not determine research findings. Keep in mind that what we value strongly influences what we see (McLaren, 1999). Consequently, I examined my own biases and research orientations to better reveal my values and the politics of representation (Grant et al., 2004).

Crisis of Representation

Within this spirit of ethics, a constant theme is the need for rigor through contextualization and collaboration. Yet, Cary (2006) argued that the notions of voice, collaboration, and representation should be addressed as fictions: im/possibilities. These notions obscure the effects of power and are embedded in realist assumptions framed as

the desires for accuracy and authenticity. This is not an argument against voice and collaboration, but rather for efforts to assure researchers remain reflexive and critical.

Inherent in any research study is the challenge of representation, in which the image of "good student" or "good preservice teacher" is created by the dominant paradigm. Such normalizing discourses perpetuate the crises of reductionist ideas (Britzman, 2003; Cary, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001). The crises endanger not only the efforts of the ethnographer's work, but also the intellectual and moral authority of ethnographers themselves (Coffey, 1999).

By bringing to bear this postmodern twist in research, "the author (and the storyteller) may no longer claim universal truth or the neutral translation of reality" (Cary, 2006, p. 25). In this light, qualitative research can be seen as cultural translation in which it is not possible to ever fully assimilate difference. "To put it briefly *representations* are *interpretations*. They can never be mirror images…[and] have consequences that must be recognized" (McRobbie, 1991, as cited in Cary, 2006, p. 52). Herein is the paradox: At one edge, interpretations are enriched by the researcher's personal experiences. At the other edge, it is imperative for the case-researcher to identify affiliations and ideologies to diminish influences and shadowed interpretations (Stake, 2006). These concerns lead back to the question of ethics and the realizations that knowing is messy. Hence, knowing is always situated, contingent, and incomplete. The researcher cannot present a fully knowable subject (Cary, 2006).

Trustworthiness and Research Validity

My vigilance as a professor and researcher is integral to addressing the ethical issues, which are entwined in trust, risk, representation, voice, and silence and are

intertwined with race, gender, and class (Ellsworth, 1989; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). My primary considerations in this study were issues of how truth would be determined, how it would be communicated, and how error would be detected and corrected. A first step in this direction requires *trustworthiness*, which is also termed *research validity* (Glesne, 1999; Mertens, 1998). Vice versa, the definition of validity has come to be "the warrant" of trustworthiness and the respondents' input (Scheurich, 1993, p. 81).

For qualitative inquiry, Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four criteria for evaluating trustworthiness, or truth value, of research: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability. Partially overlapping these four criteria are Tate's (1999) three tests of theoretical adequacy and trustworthiness: (a) intelligibility, (b) moral integrity, and (c) validity. "Intelligibility is the concern that research makes sense in light of prior research, evidence and principles of rationale thought" (Tate, 1999, p. 265). Moral integrity is concerned with ethical standards, whereas, validity can be approached through careful attention to the study's conceptualization and its component parts. One must consider the following: Were interviews validly constructed? Do conclusions of the case study rest upon data? Six methods also lend support to the claim of internal validity: (a) triangulation, (b) member checks, (c) long-term observation, (d) peer examination, (e) participatory or collaborative modes of research involving participants, and (f) clarification of researchers' biases (Merriam, 2001; Mertens, 1998).

Scheurich (1993) poignantly explained, "A researcher could be adamantly anti-racist in thought and deed and still be using a research epistemology that could be judged to be racially biased" (p. 135). Thus, trustworthiness on my part required both extended

time to build relationships and constant alertness to my own subjectivity (Glesne, 1999). Continual alertness to my own biases, my own subjectivity, also assisted in producing more trustworthy interpretations (Cary, 2006).

To establish credibility and, ultimately, validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended prolonged engagement and sufficient time with the research. To increase trustworthiness, other scholars have recommended a search for negative cases (Glesne, 1999) and failures (Lather, 1991), because part of demonstrating trustworthiness is to realize the limitations of the study. For instance, one should discuss what documents or people were unavailable, or what is peculiar about the site or respondent's selection, which shows that the phenomena of interest is present here but not elsewhere, or is not of interest to others (Ellsworth, 1989; Glesne). To help participants and readers better understand the nature of the work, the researcher actively should seek literature written from other standpoints (Hurtado & Stewart, 1997). For example, Collins (1991, 2000) and hooks (1990, 1992, 2000) provided scathing analyses of racism and politics in educational contexts.

Without a doubt, providing a balanced analysis of varying perspectives is challenging. "There is no sovereign method for establishing fieldwork truths" (Van Maanen, 1998, p. 138). Moreover, "truth claims, validity claims, are always fallible…and should be open to continuous reformulations and improvements" (Carspecken, 2002 p. 78). "Claims to truth are always discursively situated and implicated in relations of power" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002, p.118; also see Ellsworth, 1989; Lather, 1991).

A Different View of Validity

At the far end of scholarly advice, Wolcott (2001) rejected claims of validity as absurd and instead recommended seeking understanding. Also, Scheurich (1993) lamented, "Validity, whether defined as truth or as trustworthiness, whether defined by interpretivists or by criticalists, is an enactment of a modernist bias, an exclusionary, damaging bias" (p. 1). Troubled by the "mask of validity," Scheurich (1993) explained it as a "violence that slips quietly and invisibly into our best intentions and practices and…is not available to our consciousness" (p. 4). This violence—embodied in validity's dualistic practices—"judges truth" by representing "'reality' as exclusively either/or [Same/Other] and reproduces the domination of the Same over the Other" (Scheurich, 1993, p. 87). Such validity practices unconsciously inscribe a two-sided truth or trustworthiness map "within which one side is better than the Other, within which the ineffable voices of difference are subsumed by the Same" (Scheurich, 1993, p. 90).

Also challenging regimes of validity and truth, Lather (1991), Ellsworth (1992) and Popekewitz (1999) railed against dualism of Same/Other. They favored multiplicity in which validity is constructed as many sided, with multiple perspectives that are shifting and complex. Thinking beyond the framework that positions the Other as the problem, Lather (1991) shifted the role of the "cultural worker to lift the barriers that prevent people from speaking for themselves" (p. 47).

Catalytic Validity

To challenge and change the status quo, Lather (1991) proposed *catalytic validity*, in which the critical researcher has to collaborate openly with all participants, not withholding crucial information and knowledge from them (Hurtado & Stewart, 1997;

Pizarro, 1999). Through reciprocity, both the researcher and the researched "become the changer and the changed" (Lather, 1991, p. 56). "Reciprocity implies a give and take, a mutual negotiation of meaning and power" (Lather, 1991, p. 57). It is acknowledging the multiplicity of realities. Also, elucidating limitations in the study enable others to better understand reciprocity. According to Scheurich (1993), "catalytic validity will not only have reality-altering impact but it will also direct this impact so that those under study will gain self-understanding and self-direction" (p. 114-115). Thus, my intention was to employ catalytic validity by involving the participants in the critiques of this investigation, which included assessing their own schooling experiences (Pizarro, 1999).

Triangulation

Much of the problem rests in "under-understanding" or misunderstanding the blurring of terminology. So, it seems best to partition the discussion of triangulation into the what, the how, and the concerns, or (a) descriptions of the process or approach and purpose, (b) explanations of sources and methods, and (c) opinions refuting or modifying notions of triangulation.

Descriptions. "*Triangulation* is an approach of finding three related incidents to support the conclusions that are stated" (Popekewitz, 1999, p. 19). To explain, triangulation is a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning and to verify repeatability. However, since no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the case (person, event, or program) is being seen. To establish triangulation, each important finding needs to have at least three (often more) confrontations or assurances that key meanings are not

being overlooked. To reiterate, triangulation is the process to gain assurances of understandings about data findings (Stake, 2006). .

The triangulation process occurs throughout the stages of data collection and generation, analysis, and writing. Triangulation serves the purpose of assuring that the researcher has a clear picture and suitable meaning, relatively free of individual biases, and not likely to significantly mislead the reader (Stake, 2006). The process means being redundant and skeptical in seeing, hearing, coding, analyzing, and writing. It means being interested in multiplicity, "the diversity of perceptions and even the multiple realities within which people live. Triangulation helps to identify the different realities" (Stake, p. 38).

Explanations of sources and methods. What qualitative researchers find out is inherently connected with how they find it out. Methods help to determine what the researcher sees, experiences, and learns (Emerson et al., 1995). According to Mertens (1998), for triangulation to occur, there must be multiple data sources and multiple collection methods (e.g., document analysis, observations, interviews, group discussions, field notes, autobiography). In expanding this triangulated approach, Glesne (1999) went beyond multiple methods and multiple data sources and included multiple theoretical perspectives in order to increase confidence in research findings and to counteract threats to validity and credibility. Accordingly, the more methods, more sources, and more perspectives tapped for understanding, the richer the data and the more believable the findings (Glesne; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000; Wolcott, 1994, 2001).

Dissenting opinions. With regards to triangulation, not surprisingly, some scholars have expressed dissenting opinions. For instance, Lincoln and Guba (1985) dismissed

notions that through triangulation, it is possible to find consistency across sources. In turn, Lather (1991) and Stake (2006) insisted that researchers find not only repeated assurances but also counterevidence. If data are to be credible, "the researcher must consciously utilize designs which seek counter patterns as well as convergence" (Lather, 1991, p. 67). Much of the problem, in Wolcott's (2001) opinion, is that triangulation is one of those ideas that sounds great in a textbook but can pose hazards in the field:

> Wait until your informants find out that you are double-checking everything they tell you! ...The important thing is to be up front about it…to examine and, as appropriate, to qualify any and every statement a reader might perceive as a generalization that does not have a corresponding basis in fact. (Wolcott, 2001, p. 30)

There is consensus among scholars that triangulation should be used to check the factual data; however, for verification of qualitative findings, researchers also should employ member checks (Mertens, 1998). The writer must ask, "Are reports credible?" and must assure the readers "that what was told was what was there" (Stake, 2006, p.110).

Triangulation also requires going further afield, checking with people who know something about the related activity. This means using outside sources, often called colleague or peer reviews, to validate case study materials (Merriam, 2001). Researchers need to urge outsiders to find what is faulty, obligating them to say what the conclusions mean to them. Research benefits from discussions with both critical insiders and outsiders (Stake, 2006).

Special Precautions

Much of the next discussion in chapter 3 details the plan and actions I have taken to safeguard ethics, quality, and trustworthiness within this qualitative study. In the effort

to diminish risks, I have established precautions. For example, to safeguard privacy, I tape recorded and transcribed the participants' narratives, which were never housed at STU but rather kept at my home office for consideration. When a teacher candidate preferred some comment to be "off the record," the topic disappeared. After transcriptions were member checked, the audiotapes were destroyed.

To find counterevidence and to gain deeper verification of findings, I relied on two outside reviewers. Both colleagues are familiar with the STU teacher education program. By utilizing triangulation, the colleagues and I endeavored to refute or substantiate assurances and to locate multiplicity of perspectives. My fieldnotes were used to describe this process and were used as textual space for recording emotions and personal experience (Emerson et al., 1995).

Recognizing my subjective lenses consistently requires being attuned to my emotions and being aware that I can never fully know myself (Ellsworth, 1989). Consequently, I employed journaling in my fieldnotes as a way to document personal progress. With this self-critique, I conducted a smaller study about Whiteness—specifically, my Whiteness. The goal was to keep notes and explore feelings in order to learn what they were telling me about who I am in relationships and how I influence relations (Glesne, 1999). To help achieve this goal, I read extensively in the literature to situate my critique within the academy's larger pursuit of Whiteness studies. Such alertness required me to continually question the following: How am I silencing or affronting her/his opinions? What am I not hearing or seeing? What means of data collection have I not used that could provide additional support or insight? By critiquing my subjectivities, I came to better understand both my interpretations and the teacher

candidates' like or unlike perspectives when juxtaposed to my thoughts. Despite taking safeguards to meet the challenges of my Whiteness and because I am an insider/outsider, I am not released of my ethical responsibilities to protect the greater integrity of this study (Tate, 1999).

There is no question that these safeguards helped to fortify the willingness and participation of the 7 Mexican American/Hispanic teacher candidates as they described and "checked" their perceptions and negotiations of experiences at STU. If participation in this study created any psychological discomfort, it was not stated or made apparent during the interviews, member checks, or subsequent interactions. Instead, participation in the study appeared to heighten the preservice teachers' sense of belongingness and heighten their attention to multicultural issues in class discussions.

Research Design

An Overview

The starting point for the research design was regard for the participants and hence, the overarching question. A major goal was to ensure the participants a pride of place within a context of trust. After completing the forms and receiving approval from the institutional review board (which oversees the protection of humans in research studies), I met with each person to debrief and obtain informed consent. I believe they sensed that I was genuinely interested in what they had to say and liked having ownership via member checks and welcomed conversations.

All of the participants were male and female junior and senior teacher candidates who were enrolled in my classes and who self-identified as Mexican American or

Hispanic. With each participant, I explained that the research question with subsequent conversations were proposed to gain understanding of their perspectives and the ways we together might improve the teacher education program and future experiences of Others at STU.

I assured the teacher candidates that I do not perceive *Mexican American* as a problem. Since race, class, education, and gender are interlocking dimensions and not a separate identity, I believe these characteristics are assets for examining institutional and societal structures within which issues or problems are perpetuated. I explained that I wanted us to collaborate in constructing stories that would stand up to the scrutiny of both the teacher candidates (those involved in the research) and those in the academy (Bowl, 2003). Throughout the course of the study, confidentiality of the individual participants' identities was maintained through the use of pseudonyms chosen by the teacher candidates at the time of the initial interview.

After researching methodology, I determined that an ethnographic study (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 2006) was an appropriate approach for collaborating with Mexican American/Hispanic teacher candidates in revealing their descriptions and perceptions of experiences at a HBCU. A multiple case study is "the observation of life in multiple situations" (Stake, p. 83). The cases are a selected or finite group of persons whose narratives can offer a better understanding of a context or program. The multiple case design is not crafted for comparing cases. As Stake explained, comparisons obscure the situationality and complex interactions of case knowledge. Rather than comparisons, accounts are built through thick description and in particularities like the vitality, trauma, and uniqueness of the case.

Moreover, a critical inquiry of this type was appropriate, since its purpose was to inform practical knowledge and pedagogical practice at the institution. This criticalist assumption was therefore central to this research. Also, through this dialectal research study, I have rejected assimilationist and deficit ideologies, recognizing aspects of working-class and Mexicano/Latino cultures as extremely positive. By doing so, I believe the participants can sustain their cultural values and biculturalism while becoming effective teachers for increasingly diverse student populations (Bartolome & Balderrama, 2001; Elenes, 2003; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Villenas et al., 1999).

The initial data of this qualitative project were the participants' oral responses to open-ended questions. Like Freire (1968), I am interested in teacher candidates' reflecting on their place in understanding social, political, and economic contradictions. I am interested in their reading of the world as a first step toward transforming oppressive structures in education and society (Giroux, 1992; Shor & Pari, 1999). From the individual interviews, I moved into observations, fieldnotes, small group sessions, member checking, and colleagues' reviews. Throughout the process, I moved back and forth between relevant literature and the field. It became increasingly clear that a critical inquiry does not come to a close; it is a fluid and ongoing project.

Design of Study

A multiple case study starts by recognizing what concept binds the cases together. Serving as the map, the research design moves from the overarching question to answers in the conclusion. The design is inductively built. At first, this qualitative map offers only a basic structure, but eventually precise details are added. As the project expands, the research question is defined by the theoretical framework and supported by the literature

review. Next, the methodology and methods are determined along with considerations to assure ethics and quality. Beyond bringing the study participants on board to inform and collaborate with the researcher, much consideration must be given to organizing and processing the collected and generated data (Merriam, 2001). Through analysis and writing, we rethink, manipulate and represent endeavors (Coffey, 1999). In the analysis and writing stages, verification of ideas are supported by findings as well as by member checks and colleague reviews. A conclusion is formulated according to analyzed findings and lack of findings along with the limitations and implications. Still—even through triangulation—the data never can be aggregated to form a perfectly complete picture (Wolcott, 2001).

For good reason, each participant is defined as a single case that is special but similar to other participant-cases in some ways (Stake, 2006). Some distinctions or discrepancies, however, may reflect systemic problems rather than the uniqueness inherent in the individual cases providing the data (McLaren, 1999). Hence, beyond looking at each case separately, the interactions within the context help the researcher to recognize the cases as an integrated system.

> Qualitative understanding of cases requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its context and in its particular situation. The situation is expected to shape the activity, as well as the experiencing and the interpretation of the activity. (Stake, 2006, p. 2)

As the researcher seeks to capture the experiences of the persons, the dynamics of context are a useful concept for specifying cases, "but the most important data will be those driven by research questions" (Stake, 2006, p. 4).

Data Generation and Collection

This research was designed as a qualitative case study to "profoundly and authentically understand experiences from the perspectives of persons living them, through heavy reliance on the participants' own words" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 405). Within this critical case study, two characteristics prevail: the support of multiple methods of data collection and the allowance for ongoing flexibility in the data collection and analysis (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

During the spring and summer semesters of 2005, data collection and generation was an active process, continuous and recursive. Data sources involved individual interviews, small group forums, observations, fieldnotes, e-mail exchanges, and—significantly—the participants' member checking and the two colleagues' critiques. As data and findings emerged, I simultaneously consulted with and was guided by the literature. Validity in the findings was strengthened through the cross-case analysis and triangulation of the data collected from the various sources (Merriam, 2001).

This highly reflexive process allowed access both to insights about preservice teachers' experiences and to the nexus between institutional structures and teacher candidates' views and behaviors. Through discursive dialogue and reflections, these individuals' stories emerged to play a critical role in challenging their underrepresentation in mainstream thought and in the academy (Villenas et al., 1999).

Individual Interviews and Small Group Sessions

In teacher education, "*how* one teaches is part and parcel of *what* one teaches… the medium is the message" (Grossman, 2005, p. 425). This truism also applies to research integrity. How my research and teaching are transacted must show my concerns

about moral, political, and knowledge issues. How I teach prospective teachers, including topics and strategies, affects what candidates eventually believe about teaching and how they engage in the practice of teaching itself. Included within pedagogy are the more relational aspects that are established among the candidates, me, and other professors, and which shape what and how prospective teachers learn. In fact, Ropers-Huilman and Graue (1999) proposed qualitative research as "learning that comes out of relationships with others…our knowing is constantly shaped by dynamics of relationships" (p. 228).

At STU, my pedagogical style is an indirect instructional approach (via round-table discussions, demonstrations, and simulations). Hence, before this study convened, the participants and I already were accustomed to conversational exchanges about topics of pedagogy and racial issues. Yet, when positioned as the experts, the teacher candidates moved to the center with greater agency within our individual and small group discussions. Understandably, each dialogue was not only directed to the listener, but also focused on one's self while coming to terms with personal beliefs and experiences. "Our knowing of others invariably includes the knowing of ourselves" (Ropers-Huilman & Graue, 1999, p. 238).

In such a critical inquiry approach, the research participants and researcher are viewed as affiliates in the coconstruction of meaning. The aim is for deeper understandings of practice (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Rather than an emphasis on outcomes, the focus is placed on the nature of the inquiry itself. The processes are collaborative, democratic, and intentional (Grossman, 2005). For this study the interview sessions were conducted in person during the school day, typically over the lunch hour, in a safe, yet public setting. Each person participated in two individual interviews and in one

small group session. All sessions, individual and group, were audiotaped and lasted 60–75 minutes.

The semistructured format was based on an interview method developed during a preliminary study with teacher candidates at STU during the 2004 spring semester. Before conducting the interview formats (Appendixes A and B), the questions were checked via colleagues' peer reviews. Although candidates of Color often find that their cultural and experiential knowledge is not treated as a resource or even valued (Hollins & Guzman, 2005), that was not the case in this study. "A responsive learning community recognizes that academic learning has its roots in processes both out of school and in school…[and] diversity is perceived and acted on as a resource for teaching and learning, instead of a problem" (Garcia, 2004, p. 509).

Each interview began with a reassurance that there were no right or wrong answers: "It's fine not to think like everyone else." My purpose was to invoke a multiplicity of perceptions and narratives rather than focus on one story in order to problematize meanings and decipher controversies, voids, and ambiguities (Cary, 2003a, 2003b, 2004). Since all of the participants spoke fluent English, the conversations were transacted in English but peppered with Spanish names of foods or events. The interviews were emergent and participant focused. For example, at first we focused on the teacher candidate's earlier schooling experiences, personal interests, and accomplishments, before speaking directly about STU experiences. Follow-up questions emerged from their responses. By this means, I hoped to learn about how participant's perceptions of STU were shaped by life circumstances, particularly as they related to issues of racism or self-enhancement. As the sessions ended, teacher candidates were asked if they had any

questions about the study, or if there was anything else that they might not have been given the opportunity to mention.

The second interview was scheduled with each teacher candidate in order to explore further topics related to the research question. Also, questions that the participant might not have explicated fully in the first interview were discussed again in the second interview. For example, in cases when the teacher candidates had used Spanish to illustrate their point, I wanted to verify exact spellings and understandings of the Spanish words and phrases.

Each participant participated in one of three small group sessions. The aim was for the teacher candidates to generate both shared and distinct descriptions of their experiences at STU. As always, the goal was collectively to generate a pride of place among the Hispanic students at STU. Arguably, this was my own political agenda, because before the sessions, these teacher candidates had never identified as a cohort of Mexican American students. Initially, I planned to gather all 7 teacher candidates for one group session, but with everyone's frenzied schedules, the only recourse was to arrange three smaller group meetings in which 2–3 participants convened. This focus group method encouraged participants to share experiences and opinions in an open, supportive environment (Merriam, 2001).

After disseminating the format of questions to each person, I expressed my wish for them to take the helm in leading the discussion, while I operated the tape recorder and took notes. Sometimes I asked a question for clarification, but mostly I listened, watched, and recorded thoughts. Because our lives were so overly committed, rarely had any of us, prior to the group session, taken an hour to openly discuss issues like Ebonics, teaching

Hispanic children in public schools, a teacher's socioeconomic status, and the preparation of teachers at STU. Of course these topics were touched on in class assignments but not to the depth that time during our sessions permitted. The transcriptions of these sessions were returned to the participants for member checking.

Member Checks

Merriam (2001) defined member checking as the continuous process of "taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible" (p. 204). In this research project, the audiotapes from all sessions were transcribed, transcriptions were returned to the participants for member checking, and then their input was added to the data set. The purpose of checking was to ensure that I had transcribed the full import of their recorded dialogue. The residual benefit complemented the whole process. By reading and commenting on transcriptions, the study participants engaged in dialectical actions and reflections—and for some they became transformational experiences (Apple, 1999; Choe, 1999; Hollins & Guzman, 2005).

In addition, to assure that I had understood the teacher candidates' introspections and not interjected my own meanings, I asked participants to verify the narrative summaries of their enduring and situated selves as presented in chapter 4. From their oral and written comments, I then developed a group composite to cross-check information about the participants as a whole group and as unique individuals.

Colleague Checks

Whereas the participating teacher candidates found member checking to be a new experience, my two colleagues were highly familiar with such responsibilities. My reliance on two STU colleagues proved indispensable. They were selected because past interactions assured me their participation would keep me focused. They always supported me as invested watchdogs, navigators, and contributors to this project. Both colleagues read the research proposal, reacted with comments and suggestions to data findings, and kept a dutiful eye over the writing and revision process. Their actions were complementary—while one naturally focused on emerging content, the other chose to target voids and absence of arguments or evidence. The aim was to confront epistemological problems, particularly White racism or White dominance in research. As a team, we kept in mind the CORIBE report (King, 2001) that stated, "Irrespective of the race or background of the scholars concerned," the use of dominant paradigms "through language and thought reveals the fundamental problem of perspective bias in research and its application" (p. 10).

Researcher's Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes are the core of ethnographic work (Emerson et al., 1995), providing a structure and purpose to day-to-day experiences (Coffey, 1999). Fieldnotes are used both to describe places, people, and events and as textual space to record researcher emotions and personal experiences. These accounts should detail not only what is going on, but also the social and interactional processes that comprise people's everyday lives and activities (Emerson et al.). Fieldnotes contain personal anecdotes, but this does not imply any necessity for "public reading of the self" (Coffey, p. 120). The importance of

fieldnotes is in "connecting the self to the field" and serving as "textual memories of fieldwork" (Coffey, p. 121-122). In short, the researcher does not learn about meanings of others and self all at once, but in a continuous process in which new insight is built upon prior understandings (Emerson, et al).

My fieldnotes became a journal of how interactions and observations of the study participants occurred in the classrooms and hallways, at internship assignments in the public schools, and during campus events. Also, since I was the candidates' program advisor, the registration process for summer and fall semesters provided opportunities to discuss with them any family concerns, work conflicts, or future aspirations (some of which were noted in the fieldnotes).

Through the use of reflective journaling, my aim was to confront problems, especially where students might be conceptualized as at-risk or outside normative standards. The commentaries became lengthier with questions, coded notes, and marks to trigger my memories later. The recorded insights, uncertainties, and assumptions helped me to negotiate my dual roles as instructor and participant-observer and to assess strengths and shortcomings of my personal epistemology (Scheurich, 1993).

Data Analysis

Data analysis reminds me of a composer's preparation of a symphony. The conductor must be meticulous (Zinser, 1998). In effect, I analyzed the data to identify discord and harmony, before connecting the findings in chapter 5. As Coffey (1999) explained, analysis has two simultaneous yet contrastive tendencies: It is principled and formulaic, conceptualized as systematic and "documentable," but it is also elusive and

difficult to discover and describe. “Analysis engages the researcher in meaning” through intellectual rigor and through imaginative, artful, and reflexive ways (Coffey, p. 137).

For this study, the prelude for data analysis commenced as soon as collection began. This process, however, caused me to pause and delve further into literature to help guide and inform the action. While utilizing a criticalist approach, I periodically crafted analytical notes about topics of significance. These notes later helped to shape the more formal data analysis. Although I reveled in these analytic moments, full data analysis did not begin until a year later.

Formal data analysis began with a reread of the entire data set, including colleagues’ comments, fieldnotes, and memos of analytic moments. Before long, I chose to depart from the traditional format of representing data analysis. My decision was buttressed by Spindler’s (2006) argument that singular habits of coding, categorization, and themes—the usual tools of qualitative data analysis—have been associated with fragmentation and a mechanistic process that does not adequately reflect the contextual nature of the data. From Coffey (1999) I learned how conventional analytic text relegates theory to beginnings and endings but concentrates its main body of text on descriptions of empirical data. Yet, Coffey maintained that other rhetorical strategies may be more compatible for theoretical emphasis on multiplicity, complexity, power, resistance, and context. Based on Coffey’s premise and Spindler’s concern, I pursued an organizational strategy for data analysis that intersperses theoretical discussion throughout the analytical text.

Moving from organization to meaning, I perused the data to formulate 7 individual portraits and a group composite, which are discussed in chapter 4. To develop

rich descriptions, I stayed close to the data as originally recorded, selecting and portraying details that resonated with the study's purpose (Wolcott, 2001). Seeking not only to highlight uniqueness, but also to make connections across the teacher candidates' portraits, I employed Spindler and Hammond's (2000) notions of situated self, enduring self, and endangered self. I later learned these same notions can be applied to the power of place within STU (as mentioned in Appendix D).

Faced with the task of selecting and sorting the data, I followed Stake's (2006) advice and developed a matrix to guide the placement of findings and evidence in support of CRT tenets. The processes of moving back and forth from coded transcripts to member checks, fieldnotes, and colleague reviews produced cracks and intersections—creating new considerations for deliberation and growth (Cary, 2003a).

After breaking with rhetorical tradition, I returned to earlier analytic moments to investigate coding, categorization, and themes. According to Merriam (2001), coding allows the researcher to access a particular idea and then create and adapt categories relevant to the research question. According to Glesne (1999), "Places, people, and their interactions are constantly changing but concepts and processes have duration and are the building blocks of developing theory" (p. 166). Therefore, after grouping and comparing data chunks, I proposed a coding scheme that eventually led to an analysis of two major themes. The dimensions of these themes and the collision between them were described in chapter 6.

The participating teacher candidates and my two colleagues read and responded to at least one draft of these findings through the course of this study. In doing so, we recognized that all data analyses are incomplete and partial versions of life (Coffey,

1999). Yet, we found that this case-studies endeavor helped us to better understand the varied ideologies and experiences embraced by 7 teacher candidates at STU.

Summary

In chapter 3, I have examined how research design drives implementation and ultimately schooling. In order to "ask questions that produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently" (St Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 1), I chose to draw from multiple theoretical perspectives and to use multiple case study methodology, acknowledging the limitations inherent in any single approach

As explained, in this study a critical paradigm informs the theoretical perspectives of CRT, critical pedagogy, and borderlands consciousness. This approach acknowledges the political nature of the research process. Grounded in the critical paradigm are concerns with how practices of systemic inequalities frame the local experiences of individuals and groups who have the least power (Banning, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Tate, 1999). Inherent is the understanding that meaning is not discovered but constructed, and that different people construct meaning in unique ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon (Cary, 2006; Crotty, 1998).

In turn, the methodology was a qualitative multiple case study, which governed the choices and use of methods. The multiple methods included individual and small group interviews; observations, questions, and comments as recorded in the researcher's fieldnotes; member-checked responses to the transcriptions of interviews and to the first draft of findings; and two colleagues' readings and critiques of data analysis and findings. These methods were enriched by occasional e-mail exchanges and spontaneous conversations between participants and researcher during and after classes. Throughout

the research design, special attention was given to my role as participant-observer and to how Whiteness can affect the participants' involvement and interpretations of findings. Thus, for good reason, I utilized a critical conceptual framework with a multiple case study approach to explore how Mexican American/Hispanic teacher candidates describe their perceptions and experiences at a HBCU.

These choices and decisions in research design and implementation have broad base support in the literature. "Given the complexity of teacher education and its connections to various aspects of teacher quality and learning, no single methodological or theoretical approach will be able to provide all that is needed to understand how and why" context and program influence educational outcomes (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005, p. 743). As Cochran-Smith and Zeichner recommended, a multitheoretical and multimethods approach to studying issues in teacher education offers the best hope for producing knowledge that is useful for policy and practice. In this vein, it is significant to note that critical inquiry does not come to a close; it is a fluid and ongoing project. With every action taken, the context changes, and we must again critique assumptions to forward reflections with actions (Crotty, 1998).

CHAPTER 4: SEVEN BORDER CROSSERS

Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar.
Traveler, there are no roads. The road is created as we walk it (together).
Macedo, 1993

Highlighted within this chapter are significant journeys endured and achieved by the 7 teacher candidates. Also delineated are our travels and border crossings as researcher and researched participants. My objectives in this chapter were to describe the rationale for selecting the 7 teacher candidates, to discuss the working relationship that developed among the preservice teachers within our small teacher preparation program, and to illuminate via the individual portraits how their identity narratives reflected their multiple positions and perspectives. Next, explanations encompass the group sessions, the critical issues confronting the participants, a turn in the study's focus, and qualities emerging as the participants crisscrossed borders of class and race (Anzaldua, 1999; Darder et al., 2003; Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992; McKenna, 2003; Villenas et al., 1999).

Group Collage

The 7 teacher candidates were interesting for four main reasons:

1. They successfully negotiated Color as Mexican Americans and/or Hispanics. In situations where their choice was narrowed to Black or White, they chose White, thus recognizing the multifaceted and often contradictory nature of being simultaneously Brown and White (depending on what ethnic and racial markers were employed) (Valdivia, 2005).

2. Against multiple adversities, all 7 were first-generation college students who were working exceedingly hard to earn a college degree and a teaching certificate.

3. Although not in any way ashamed of their ethnicity, they played down their ethnic heritage in an effort to assimilate into the academic and curricular activities at STU.

4. As they prepared to become teachers in multicultural classrooms, they believed their diverse linguistic and cultural experiences would serve as an asset, a resource, within the schools and broader society.

Six of the 7 candidates were born and raised in Central Texas within commuter proximity to STU. The 7th participant was raised in South Texas, but he was drawn to STU by opportunities to play baseball while acquiring his degree. All graduated from public schools in Texas and, except for Louis, all were serious about academics in high school. In Louis's case, "I always made a 70 so I could play sports." All 7 participants in this study described their families as a priority (Hidalgo, 1999). All candidates' parents had attended high school but no schooling beyond. As much as possible, their families were supportive of their college education and professional goals. Nonetheless, 3 of the teacher candidates needed to assume the stalwart caregiver position within their three-generation family.

Whereas 3 participants had been awarded partial athletic or academic scholarships at STU, all were using Pell Grant Loans, available to low-income students, to help fund their education. Additionally, during their junior or senior year, all had received some Teach for Texas grant monies, which at STU were available to preservice teachers who had sustained at least a 2.75 GPA and who had passed the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA, an exam to prove proficiency in reading, writing, and math). Nonetheless, at this private institution, all of them "fund[ed] their diplomas with debt"

(Quinn, 2006, p. 43). All 7 of them will leave college with $12,000–$19,900 in student loans—debts they will struggle with for a long time.

Added to the intensity of financial concerns, 5 of the 7 study participants were also parents. Six were employed at least 30 hours or more a week. Hence, they brought to class discussions and to their approaching teaching careers their variant experiences in the business sector. To help their families survive, 2 of the female candidates regrettably had to swallow their pride and accept welfare assistance. The female participant who did not work outside the home had to leave her position as a public school registrar to bury her second of three sons following his brave but arduous battle with cancer. Such hardships took an emotional toll, as noted by Quinn (2006): "Whether money is the worst of the barriers facing the poor" is "the raging debate in student-aid circles today" (p. 43).

During high school, 4 of the 7 teacher candidates held impressive leadership positions: 2 as class president for 3–4 consecutive years, 3 as captain of their athletic teams, 1 as a dance team lieutenant, and 1 as drum major of the band. The 3 teacher candidates who were also athletes at STU (a volleyball player and two baseball players) attributed their character development to the role of their high school coaches. During their high school athletic careers, all 3 athletes distinguished themselves with district and regional commendations.

Although 5 of the study participants fluently could switch from Spanish to English, they expressed concern that their Spanish was not as good as they considered essential for an effective bilingual teacher. In particular, 2 of the Mexican American teacher candidates expressed regret and bemoaned incidents when they were wrongly assumed to be fluent bilingual speakers as well as sage purveyors of Latino culture. Such

situations eventually prompted them to purchase and use Spanish-English dictionaries within instructional settings and to seek foundational knowledge about their heritage. At STU today, these concerns are becoming critical issues: the lack of dual language training and the limited access to coursework in Texas borderlands and Latin American history. As of 2006, STU does not offer advanced courses in Spanish (beyond the second year) or teacher training in Bilingual Education or in English as a Second Language (ESL) and offers only two upper level history courses dealing with Latin American history and Texas borderlands history.

Selection Process: Building Relationships

For this study, I focused on the 7 self-identified Mexican Americans in the STU teacher education program who had completed their general core curriculum and who were primarily fulfilling their teacher preparation coursework. Of the 7 participants, 4 candidates pursued their college education only at STU. The other 3 candidates began their college experiences at other universities, but the bulk of their coursework was accomplished at STU.

In all of my classes as well as department and faculty meetings, I publicly announced that the intent of this study was to investigate the experiences and perspectives of Hispanic Americans at our university. My ulterior motive for this public acknowledgement of political and ideological beliefs was to stimulate auspicious interest in welcoming, affirming, and better serving non-Black students on the STU campus (Bartolome & Balderrama, 2001; Nieto, 2001) and to promote transformative actions (Hidalgo, 1999). With this political agenda, I believed a secretive stance about the topic would hinder rather than help. At the same time, I heeded warnings that any stance of

"researcher neutrality masks an underlying conceptual framework that posits the behavior and experiences of people of color to be inferior to Whites" (Tate, 1997, as cited in Hidalgo, p. 101).

With the study participants, the interviews were transacted in meeting areas where our presence was openly visible to other students and faculty. No doubt, more covert negotiations would have provided different insights about this study, but such relations would not have favored the integrity—and agenda—I upheld as a critical scholar. Pizarro (1998) argued that when the "researcher enters into her work as a caring individual who shares the concerns of the community in which she is working—issues of ideology and power can be addressed in revelatory ways" (p. 70). Along with caring about the integrity of the participants (Goldstein, 1997, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999), I also had hoped that from our research endeavors, the participants would come to understand that they too were scholar-activists and that they too were capable of such graduate work.

After making public announcements about the purpose of this study, I invited each candidate individually to participate, and I used the Study Consent Form to explain his/her responsibilities. For many reasons, I believed it was essential that no one felt coerced to participate, especially since the teacher candidates were juggling excessive hardships in order to remain in college. I assured each individual that a refusal to participate would not mean a difference in a course grade or result in later repercussions. All 7 candidates agreed, in part because each candidate and I had solidified a trusting relationship through prior coursework and department activities. The 4 seniors, whom I knew best, participated immediately. The 3 remaining teacher candidates, all in their

junior year, needed considerably more time to squeeze into their chaotic schedules the two interviews and the small group sessions.

During the course of this study, I was the major program advisor at STU for all of the 87 teacher candidates as well as their major professor, teaching six of the junior- and senior-level, precertification courses. Since all teacher education program faculty were housed in one building, we easily forged a community of learners within our small classes of 4–24 students. My sentiments echoed one participant's comment, "We are all just one big family." By choice, I played an integral role in the professional development of STU teacher candidates. After all, their accountability as teachers would reflect strongly on the guidance and instruction gained at STU.

Rather than an emphasis on tests, my own teaching philosophy supported open student dialogue, group assignments, lesson simulations, and portfolio projects. Readings and activities often were correlated to the state teacher certification tests in an effort to fortify all candidates with strategies to pass their exams on their first attempt. Through coursework, I critiqued all of the study participants' philosophies of education, autobiographies, résumés, and work-sample portfolios. I also observed 3 of the 7 teacher candidates at their field internship sites.

As expected, my acquaintance with the 7 teacher candidates expanded as they pursued their coursework, exchanged casual conversations, and met with me for individual interviews and member checks. Pizarro (1999) wrote, "I asked students open-ended questions, shaped by my own research, questions that allowed me to look at the school through their eyes" (p. 56). After receiving transcriptions of their interviews, participants Theodore and Susan (the older, more cautious, detail-oriented adults)

responded by writing additionally thorough descriptions with exact spellings. The others simply added a few facts and signed their signature, indicating their agreement with the data.

Cautiously, I continued, seeing that all 7 participants supported my research efforts. I was encouraged when Joey e-mailed, "Sure, I'll be at the group session. I want to give back something because I've received so much from this place." Throughout the study, the participants seemed intrigued with the research process. After they proofread the transcripts of their interviews, other teacher candidates made remarks similar to Constance's e-mail: "Seeing my life in that format really surprised me." Joey laughingly commented after the group session, "That felt good to talk intelligently."

Collecting Narratives

"The self is constituted in relation to multiple narratives," contended Haymes (2003, p. 232). Narratives help to shape social reality as much by what they exclude as what they include. The contradictions and consistencies provide the context for understanding how the narratives silence identities or marginalize differences (McLaren, 1993). I was highly intrigued by how Villenas (1996; Villenas et al., 1999) in her work employed the sense of self and the surrender of self. Keeping in mind formations of identity and self, for this study, I collected narratives to build portraits that reflected the enduring self and the situated self (Spindler, 2006; Spindler & Hammond, 2000).

Reading Delgado-Gaitan's (1993) use of enduring self and situated self led me to Spindler's (2006) explanations of these concepts as a psychosocial framework to examine the nature of change. Whereas Spindler employed these terms to reflect the forces of identity changes in himself and his wife (ethnographers in the field), Delgado-Gaitan

found the terms helpful in describing the nature of change in participants and in how the research changed the researcher (herself). The concept of enduring self has its roots in childhood and allows us to understand the way in which our beliefs, values, and practices are constructed through our cultural communities and the continuity in our lives. The situated self is a conception of not only how one develops and evolves within a particular context, but also how the person transforms the given contexts and activities. The situated self represents the shifting of those values, beliefs, and practices as a result of new contexts and new knowledge. It is the "situated self, or more appropriately, selves…in response to necessity that make sense of whatever situation one finds oneself in" (Spindler, p. 66). Within experiences, "meaning is the relationship between situation and action" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 548). As revealed in the participants' portraits, these constructs of enduring self and situated self do not remain dichotomous but become interconnected (Spindler; Spindler & Hammond, 2000). Pizarro (1998) explained that while identity is important, it is the values that determine the actions students take and that shape the nature of efforts at transformation and empowerment.

Since all 7 teacher candidates had taken one or more of the six courses I taught, I knew them well beyond the two individual interviews and group sessions. Even so, our one-to-one interviews and the member-check process strengthened our relationship, providing us reciprocal insights that we would not have gained without those conversations (Pizarro, 1998, 1999). Constance remarked,

> That day that I went home after the first interview, I told Steve (my boyfriend), "Wow! I learned so much about myself. It opened my mind to see many things…all about my teaching style, new ways to think about problems, my background."

The interviews bolstered moments of time for self-reflection:

> Identities are no longer just discursive options—they are also the name we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past as well as the narratives of the present and future. Thus, to answer the question "Who?"…is to tell a story of a life. (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, pp. 18-19)

When asked if participation in this study had caused a change in perceptions, Susan responded, "Definitely! Like how Hispanics may be the 'outsider.' I never thought about it—culture—that, that way. There were things I used to not notice. I notice those things now."

Noticing things was a major aspect of our research travels. What follows are the individuals' portraits, which elucidate their diverse identities and their experiences at STU. Beyond their unique lives, they can be distinguished by their dreams to teach history (Theodore), special education (Klarissa and Louis), kinesiology (Joey), and early childhood–fourth grade (Susan, Mary, and Constance). The narratives begin with Theodore, the oldest at 54, descending by age to Constance, the youngest teacher candidate at 23.

Individual Portraits

Theodore

Theodore was guarded, hardworking, contemplative, and highly dependable. Of intrigue, and exemplary of Theodore's nature, was how his shyness did not preclude him from getting all jobs done. He admitted, "History is my passion." In his quests to hear and see "the primary source," he disregarded annoyances like standing in line for the ticket, finding parking, and other frustrations that quelled such desire within most people. For example, he felt proud to have heard the president of Mexico, Vincente Fox, speak

and was pleased to have attended a renowned lecturer present "The Life and Works of W. E. B. DuBois." Theodore mused, "I tried life without an education. I made a big mistake. I have a lifetime of experiences to bring to the classroom."

Enduring self. Having been born and raised in the neighborhood close to the STU campus, Theodore savored his memories as high school class president, class favorite, and drum major of the band. Happily married for 23 years, Theodore and his wife take immense pride in their family of one teenage son, three adult children, and three grandchildren. It came as no surprise to learn that Theodore camped out all night at the district school headquarters in order to attain one of the few waivers for their son to attend a better high school. "I wanted him to transfer in order to make sure that he gets college-prep classes. Easy classes are a liability later on in life." Beyond volunteering on school committees, Theodore, along with his wife, especially has enjoyed chaperoning the band members' trips to state and national competitions.

Situated self. After trying higher education at three different large universities in Texas, Theodore took a 25-year sabbatical to manage his own business before enrolling at STU. "Here I feel more a part of the institution. I tried to find myself at the other schools, but I finally came to the conclusion to come back home." Since Theodore's business commitments constrained the time available, he only took classes early in the morning, during lunch, or late in the day; thus, completing his education required 6 years. In order for him to student teach all day during his last semester, Theodore and his family faced huge sacrifices. It was conjecture whether his old car could make it another mile. Although colleagues tried to persuade Theodore to pursue teaching in private or Catholic schools, he was steadfast: "I want to give back to the kids on the East Side." Theodore

saw teaching as a way to reach teenagers who did not know their history. He wanted his students "to see the past to understand their present." Fortunately, Theodore had an STU professor who applauded his passion, guided him through the borderlands and civil rights, and pushed him to enrich his lessons with video streaming and media pizzazz.

When asked to discuss curricula that could have prompted anger or embarrassment, Theodore chuckled and replied, "I've developed thick skin over the years, probably because of my age, when discussing Mexican stereotypes…I comprehend that to understand different cultures, we must discuss these differences in order to respect the beliefs of all." Held in high regard by classmates, Theodore typically deflected their praise by turning the spotlight on others. "The students here are very respectful and refer to me as 'sir.' The reason I feel that I have been treated so well is because of my age."

Susan

Susan was determined, detail oriented, artistic, nurturing, and a vigilant advocate for Others less able or less knowledgeable. With a White husband but closely bonded with her Mexican American parents, Susan effectively navigated her bicultural identities.

Enduring self. Through language, religion, and her past, she maintained strong connections to her Mexican heritage. In channeling her two sons' futures and her own teaching career, she relied on her fair skin and command of English often to position herself as White.

> When I don't feel comfortable is when I walk into a room full of women all speaking Spanish. Because they expect you to know Spanish and their culture. Even my dad's family is like that. We went to visit his relatives. The woman was doing all of the work. The husband said, "Bring me this…bring me that!" You could tell that the woman realized it was different in our house, because she would crack jokes about it. She served him even though she knew that we didn't do it for our husbands.

With her two sons, Susan consciously discussed the origins of their bicultural heritage as well as the consequences of racism. She was vigilant in not allowing her sons to slur any peers.

Situated self. At appropriate times—those teachable moments—she shared with our class anecdotes about the sorrow of losing her middle son to cancer when he was 4 years old. While Susan and her husband cared for their terminally ill son, Susan stopped working as registrar at the school in their small rural town. Consequently, they had no recourse but to apply for welfare. Susan still anguished over the bureaucracy they endured while trying to sustain their family and at the same time negotiate food stamps, their home mortgage, and their son's death certificate. She resented the stereotypical treatment by the welfare workers who treated her as if she "was a shiftless Mexican mother. [Now] I mark each day on the calendar until my graduation—that will end my nightmare on welfare."

After earning an associate degree in commercial art, Susan pursued bilingual teacher certification at a large state university until marriage and family commitments instead compelled her to seek employment. After having served as the school nurse's assistant, an aide in a special education class, and finally the school registrar, Susan gained a realistic perspective about schools:

> I've seen teachers yell at kids, say things like 'stupid,' belittle them, be sarcastic. Throughout my 11 years in the classroom, I saw terrible things. As a parent I have an understanding that you can hurt a child at an early age. I want to tell teachers, 'Watch what you say to children and how you say it. If you have a problem with a child, *get help*. You can destroy a child's spirit.'

Susan's neighbor, a Hispanic teacher and graduate of STU, convinced Susan that STU was the better college for her. "Being 40 makes me different (laughs). I attended the large

public university. It was too cold; the students were hanging out everywhere, too much immaturity, and the parking was difficult. I like the smaller setting here."

Susan detested lackadaisical professors. Her attitude echoed the other nontraditional students' belief that private college tuition should offer quality education. Susan also recognized situations at STU where she might have benefited from being Black: "Yes, if I was African American right now with my high grade point and my skills, I would have more opportunities." Susan was expressing her disillusionment that not she, but fellow classmates of African American heritage had been asked to intern at the Texas Education Agency and asked to represent STU at national conferences.

Interconnecting situated self to enduring self. Susan exuded the authentic caring and *educacion* identified by Valenzuela (2000). Since Susan served as my lab assistant, I knew her the best of all the participants in this study. Without any call for attention, she tutored other less capable students in their classwork, diffused conflicts among teacher candidates at odds with each other, provided students vital information about social services agencies, and assisted students with advanced computer technology projects. Then, a student's apartment burned, and another single-parent mom faced excruciating financial problems. For those teacher candidates, without fanfare, Susan searched through her church's relief closet to find household items and clothing.

Joey

Joey Tribiani evoked thoughts that ranged from robust and athletic to tender-hearted, ethical, and entertaining. He specifically chose Joey Tribiani as his pseudonym because "he's the Italian guy from the [TV] show, 'Friends.'" Although Joey could be a

team player, he set himself apart because he adhered to a self-imposed strict moral code and to a disciplined nutrition and fitness regime.

Enduring self. Along with valuing his strong Catholic faith and his strenuous workouts, Joey loved to laugh and chuckled as he told humorous stories, many times about himself. Of all participants, he seemed the most comfortable and self-assured in identifying himself as Mexican American. Joey was rooted in his strong family and his extended family, all of whom lived in and near the same farming town in Central Texas. When asked, "How do you interpret the terms *middle class* and *working class*?" Joey said, "Those terms are what I am. They mean we had enough food to eat at home on the table, but we had to work to get it and kept it there."

Situated self. Joey's successes during high school were remarkable. Outstanding in both football and baseball, he was recognized on the All-CenTex team for 2 years and as an All-District player for 3 years in both sports. He also served as class president for 3 consecutive years and as vice president of his class during his senior year. He credited his successes to "a great principal, supportive teachers, strong influence by my coaches. In my high school, the ethnic groups were balanced. My peers got along with everybody. Lots of school spirit."

Although his favorite sport was football, he chose to attend STU because of baseball. "When I met [the coach], he promised me playing time as a freshman, which is rare…I did play 30 out of 65 games my freshman year." Since he "didn't want the experience of dorm life" while attending STU, Joey lived at home with his parents as well as maintained part-time employment, assembling computer boards. During his 5th

year at STU, Joey completed student teaching and served as the assistant coach for the STU baseball team: "I wanted to be a coach, so I knew I had to be a teacher first."

When asked, "What does it mean to be a Mexican American student at a primarily Black college?" Joey responded, "Like any other student. Doesn't matter. I didn't have to act any different. I made a lot of friends pretty quickly." When teaching or elsewhere, Joey did not use labels:

> A coach made me aware that there are other ways to talk about students. Rather than saying, "That Black kid," say, "The one who is very quiet, or always sits on the bench by himself." I learned from him to find ways to discuss students rather than by their racial tags. When I hear my students using labels, I say, "You're lucky to be around these kids. You're lucky you're in this school. Learning how to be with different people will help you for the rest of your life, in business, in your career, forever."

Joey eventually chose to return to his hometown to coach and teach because he believed that few of the students had ever met a successful Mexican American male with a college diploma. His attitude brings to mind Ladson-Billings' (1994) findings about culturally relevant teachers. Specifically, effective teachers of African American children see their role as one of giving back to the community. For Joey, his situated self in sports, schooling, and a multiethnic community evolved into his enduring teacher persona.

Destiny

Destiny, 34, epitomized petite survivor. Indeed, when the forecast was grim, Destiny kept paddling. She exuded a zest for learning and creativity as well as a youthful style and smiling disposition. She was also a doting mother and an avid photographer.

Enduring self. When asked to describe her ethnic identity, Destiny responded, "Explain to me the differences." After considering Latina, Chicana, Hispanic, and Mexican American, she said, "I'm Hispanic. My dad is from Piedras Negras [Mexico]and

my mother is from Eagle Pass [Texas]. All of the people in my dad's family are light skinned." The next time we met, Destiny exclaimed, "I'm so excited. My grandpa is here from Mexico. This afternoon I'm cooking green enchiladas for him. My sister has already made *caldo*."

Destiny explained that she got her creativity in teaching from her loveable mother, who never hesitated to spontaneously dress as a clown or astronaut to keep her grandchildren entertained and learning. "I'm just now realizing how wonderful she is." Yet, Destiny's 9-year old son was her universe and motivation: "I tell my son to always reach for the stars." Time and again, Destiny related our class discussions to her son's schooling experiences, and vice versa; she told him about our class discussions. Often she asked to borrow children's books to read to him. Also, Destiny's son accompanied her on university-sponsored events such as the MLK March, the Easter Egg Hunt, and the field trip to a ranch to visit with young physically disabled residents. With certainty, Destiny was determined to be a good mother and determined that her son would be disciplined and successful.

Situated self. Initially, Destiny chose not to participate in this study. She was in a downward spiral caused by the struggles of being a college student with a full-time job while being a single mother entangled in a messy divorce. She did not receive child support and thus worried about getting the food and clothes her son needed. She was working with a lawyer to obtain child support, but the lawyer appeared too involved with another case to be of much help. Days after Destiny purchased her first car—a used car—it proved unreliable. Even worse, she suffered a serious neck injury when her "stupid" car was rear-ended by a city bus driver. Then Destiny haggled with unscrupulous car

salesmen, car mechanics, medical workers, and insurance representatives. Unfortunately, she had to settle for a minimal reimbursement. After much chiropractic therapy, Destiny approached me, saying, "I'm ready to participate. I want you to hear my story."

> You have to understand, Ms. D, I always wanted to go to college. But *no* one, *no* teacher, *no* one ever encouraged me to go. I went to school in New Braunfels [Texas], which was very racist. I never got any feedback to say, "You should go to college. This is how you get to college. You should understand there's a lot of difference between the ways different students are treated." My parents were very strict. They didn't feel comfortable with me going to college. Now my dad says, if he had known how to get me into college, he would have agreed much earlier.

Questioned about her early schooling, she commented, "I loved school. I love reading. Even when I didn't have any homework, I would take home my books." The same zeal was evidenced in Destiny's approach to college studies: She arrived early to classes, intently read her assignments, refused to be absent, and sought tutorial help and resources—whatever was needed to learn. "I tell my son to read, and even if it's the same book twice, you'll learn something." Nonetheless, Destiny's sparse income was never sufficient. Life was always tenuous for Destiny and her son.

Louis

Louis was high-energy, forthright, considerate, and physically fit. Upon learning his story, one could only wonder in amazement how Louis sustained his positive demeanor and intense commitments. According to some theorists (Anyon, 1997; Cummins, 1996; Knapp & Woolverton, 2004), his positive attitude was possibly a form of resistance to the many social class challenges he faced**.** "Students taking positive courses of action to achieve their goals can be just as resistive as those who self-destruct with their flagrant, insupportable challenges to the system" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 229).

Unlike the others in this study, Louis fought to overcome misfortunes of early rejection by his mother and his illegal, risky behaviors as a teen. Louis did not want to repeat such mistakes with his own daughter and family. Knowing what "could have happened" in his life without the help of many caring adults, Louis strove to be an exceptional special education teacher and coach at the high school level.

Enduring self. Louis explained,

> I had a good family. Everything was good. I have a good family. My dad was always working in the oil fields. He could only come home on the weekends. My grandparents were strict, really strict. I couldn't do things that other kids were doing.

Louis found solace in sports, his marker of identity and a connection to his family: "I just cared about sports. …At that time, I remember, my dad was a truck driver. He would make it back to go to my games. My grandpa and my dad were always at my games."

Louis added,

> I use everything that my grandparents taught me…like organizational skills. Now when I get home, I don't want clutter. I like things organized. …Since I was 8 years old, I've worked in the watermelon fields. It was understood that we would all work in the fields. …
>
> When my grandmother died, I just took off. I didn't want to do nothing, no more. My family got together. They were strong for me. They were hurting but they said, "What do you think your grandma would want you to do?" That's one of the things I tell everybody when they have someone who passed. I ask them to think about what the person would want for them.

Louis' determination to not give up against the odds came from his family's insistence that he learn from mistakes.

> Even when I wrecked my uncle's truck, he told me, "Learn from your mistake." …I was embarrassed. I cried, but he told me to learn something from it. My grandparents never made money an issue. We always had food in the house.

Situated self. During his highly impressionable adolescence, Louis did things he regretted.

> The crowd in middle school (shakes head), that's where I got into gangs, trouble, not drugs but cigarettes, beer, I did smoke pot. It was a lot of peer pressure, and I was jealous that my friends had so much freedom. I was mad. I had to stay at the house. I stayed and yelled at my grandmother. I started sneaking out a lot. I got in a little bit of trouble: weed, a couple of times inhaling gas—that's one of the stupidest things I've ever done. I've done other stuff, but that was one of the stupidest. People can't believe that I used to do those things but don't any more. My dad never gave up on me. I changed. I didn't want to be that way any longer.

Louis shook his head in awe that he was helped by so many coaches:

> I don't know what it is, but the coaches would always find me. …I mean, they had me up at 6:00 a.m. doing work. …I mowed the grass, helped one of them remodel his house. Another coach…hmmmm, people have always come into my life [to help me].

As was the case with many other college baseball players, Louis's love of the game prompted him to try out for the athletic program at yet another college. After first trying the baseball programs at two other universities, Louis transferred to STU, having the assurance of more playing time and a partial scholarship. Soon, he was elected co-captain by a team of highly diverse players who also came to STU from other programs. (Intriguing to me was the fact that the 2006 STU baseball team had only one Black player. Even the players from St. Thomas and the Virgin Islands considered themselves Latino, not Black.)

Not one to ignore conflict, Louis confronted problems head on. When his girlfriend became pregnant, Louis did not hesitate to take responsibility. Very soon after his daughter's birth, he took guardianship of his two teenage half-brothers. Worried about their risky behaviors and high absenteeism, Louis transferred them to a local high school and, as much as possible, supervised their academics and activities. Atop their mounting problems at school, their house burned down in 2005. However, the insurance company "hasn't paid anything. They're still looking into it. And my dad had just renovated it, but there's lot of kids on drugs around, and older people on drugs."

The road games and baseball practices, plus working at a large grocery store evenings (from 8:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.) and on weekends, took their toll, leaving Louis fatigued and anxious about his studies. For Louis, problems escalated after a fellow employee stole his wallet and used his identity and credit cards to charge massive bills. The ensuing legal and financial entanglements further usurped Louis's energies and heightened his worries about rent, car, and tuition payments. His family's dire financial problems intensified Louis's sense of urgency to complete his degree. His commitments playing baseball prevented him from taking afternoon and evening classes, some of which were only offered once a year at STU. Consequently, it would take Louis at least a year longer to graduate after his fourth and final season playing ball. That would require extending his loan for tuition, since no athletic scholarship even partially covers a 5th year.

Louis paused to connect his childhood experiences with his present situation: "I never understood. Now it's coming together [how much they helped me]. I hope that I make an impact on my daughter like my parents [his grandparents] made an impact on me." This narrative represents what Pizarro (1998) pointed out, that Chicano oral tradition is evolutionary: "It is often in the telling of the story that its meaning is first understood…by retelling and reinterpreting, its deeper meaning is revealed" (p. 69).

Klarissa

Klarissa could be characterized as resourceful, committed, passionate to teach the special-needs child, and candid. Klarissa functioned at the edge: always busy, always helping someone.

Enduring self. Although chaos was all too familiar in her life, Klarissa remained a positive, can-do person. "It's my determination. I don't give up." Consistently confident, Klarissa was optimistic about her future as a special education teacher and athletic coach. "I have a cousin who is ADHD [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder]. …I would hear how he acted at school. I would think, 'There has to be a way to help him; someone needs to come.'" When asked what can be learned from African American and Hispanic teachers, Klarissa wrote, "Diversity counts. We can help each other reach our goals."

Situated self. During elementary school, Klarissa's parents' tumultuous divorce thrust her into a position of moving from house to house, from town to town. "My mother worked two jobs, so I stayed with my grandmother." This turmoil caused her to vacillate between predominantly White elite schools and predominantly minority schools. "I grew up a tomboy with guy cousins that helped me with sports." Surprisingly along the way, Klarissa acquired a good knowledge base and astute leadership and survival skills:

> There was a wonderful coach. She probably changed my life. She helped me become independent. My mom didn't agree. They were eventually "at it" [arguing]. …My mom is known for making scenes. I stood up for myself. At that point, I distanced myself. ...Then I stayed with my dad.

Klarissa had been a 3-year captain of her high school softball team and 2-year captain of her volleyball team and thus yearned to feed her "addiction" when she joined college. "Sports has always been an acceptance part of me...helping people get to know me." Her sophomore year at STU, she joined the Lady Volleyball team. At first, her African American teammates voiced concern that "I—the White girl—would get their athletic scholarship." However, Klarissa kept her academic scholarship by maintaining a high GPA. Eventually, Klarissa's talent and diplomacy convinced her teammates to accept her as a valid contributor on the team.

> I'm here to win. I'm training hard. I like the coach. He's White…but the others argue. I suspect racism. It's been interesting. The coach is also a certified referee, which really helps. I can't understand why he is ever questioned.

For her senior season, Klarissa wrestled with a chance to accept the captain position, but personal stresses forced her to stop playing entirely.

During the course of this study, Klarissa gave up the pleasures of playing volleyball to live with, and care for, her terminally ill grandmother. "I take care of my grandmother. Since the eighth grade, she has inspired me." At the same time, Klarissa also completed two student-teaching assignments in one semester and continued her evening and weekend employment at her dad's retail clothing store. Rather than move her grandmother to a hospice facility, she drove her to daily medical treatments. Then, Klarissa made all arrangements for her funeral.

From my viewpoint, more than the other study participants, Klarissa strove to assimilate into the STU campus traditions. Yet, Klarissa expressed regret: "I feel I've missed a lot since I don't live on campus." Certainly, the immense emotional and financial strains prevented Klarissa from fully enjoying academic and curricular activities.

Constance

Constance was soft spoken yet spirited, gentle yet resolute. Of all the participants in this study, Constance's experiences most resembled any typical young college coed. After a counselor suggested that she be excused from her high school class to visit a recruiter, Constance applied only to STU based on its promise of a family environment with small-sized classes. Although her stepfather's brother played baseball for several semesters at STU, her mother had never heard of the school. Still, Constance said, "My

parents were completely excited for me" to be the only one of three daughters to pursue a college degree.

Enduring self. Constance explained, "I've never felt like a minority. In other words, I've never felt discriminated against…not at school, but in public a few times. It was from an Anglo woman." When asked how she identified herself, she responded, "I say Mexican. My mom's White. My dad's Hispanic. My grandmother is German and all kinds of European heritages. I just automatically say Mexican, 'cause people think that." When asked about the future, Constance responded, "As far back as I can remember, I've wanted to be a teacher. A teacher can help mold, shape a child's life."

Situated self. As a young girl with a Spanish surname, Constance adamantly explained that she was half Mexican and half White. In doing so, she used a demonstrative arm motion to prove that while half of her was Mexican, the other half was White. Constance laughed, knowing that her particular arm motion was a vulgar sign in some cultures. "My mom always told me to put *Hispanic* filling out forms. At times, I didn't know what to put. I guess it was the equal opportunity thing…she felt I'd have a leg up." Yet, Constance remained ambivalent: "Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't."

As a child living in the rough, southeast section of town, Constance found, "It was hard to focus on not getting beat up. It wasn't cool to be interested in school." A "complete change" occurred when her mother moved their family to a predominantly White neighborhood and a "preppy school." At first, "I really had to work hard to fit in. …School wasn't at the top of my list." An English teacher told Constance to stop following the others and to concentrate on her studies. Although she was "the old type of teacher, a mean old lady that pushed," Constance wisely heeded her advice.

Constance "loved" high school, realizing her passion—the dance team. Her confidence zoomed when she was elected lieutenant and selected for the honors dance squad. The stresses, however, became too much. As her senior year approached, Constance realized that she could no longer be a team officer because of the endless practices and weekend contests, along with the demands to continue her grades and maintain her job at Target. Since the age of 16, working had never been optional.

With enthusiasm, Constance embraced college life. Of the 7 study participants, she was the only one who lived in the dormitory at STU, which proved to be a horrible experience. She "hated the hair in the sink and hair everywhere. …It was dirty, my roommates didn't care. …I started spending the nights off campus with friends, and then eventually I didn't live there at all. I moved home." Constance continued to explain, "In the suite…two girls ruled. They didn't care. My roommate was okay, but she didn't have much influence on them either."

Constance met her boyfriend at STU. At first she did not pay much attention to him, a Hispanic track athlete. Yet, when he chose to sit beside her in a physical education class, she eventually noticed their similar interests. Eventually they made plans to marry. They were fortunate to both enroll in the same Human Anatomy class and could share one textbook, but neither could afford to purchase the $125 lab manual plus the lab kit.

> There was no way to buy that. No way. So another one of our classmates let us borrow her manual to make copies. …I felt guilty because this person spent $100 and we, like, didn't go half with her. …That was a problem not to have the money. It was a pain. I felt bad. Textbooks are expensive.

Small Group Sessions: Critical Consciousness

Giroux (1992) explained, "Border Pedagogy must provide the conditions for students to engage in cultural remapping as a form of resistance…where they do not have

to put their identities on trial each time they address social and political issues" (p. 33). Pizarro (1998) claimed an important part of the work in addressing the needs of Chicana/o students is "to affirm the validity of their own voices" (p. xii). What became problematic in this study was the scheduling of the small group session, which originally was proposed as the time for the teacher candidates to share and "affirm the validity of their own voices," fulfilling Pizarro's suggestion. Yet, taking into consideration the participants' pressing commitments, it proved impossible to find one date or an hour for everyone to convene. I conceded by hosting sessions with one group of 3 teacher candidates and two groups of 2 members. The information shared during these sessions was far more enlightening than even I anticipated. Theodore commented, "It was good to hear the others' experiences…how they have experienced this college." Giroux (1992) stated,

> Critical educators must provide the conditions for students…to not only hear the voices of those students who have been traditionally silenced, they must take seriously what all students say by engaging t implications of their discourse in broader historical and relational terms. (p. 32-33)

Hosting these group sessions aligned with Valenzuela's (1999) premise: "Additive schooling is certainly about the maintenance of community" (p. 270).

Before the sessions, some of the study participants had never met or they were acquainted only at a distance. After all, they were of different ages, had variant interests, and, beyond academics, juggled many demands on their time. Yet, they seemed to enjoy the group exchanges and lingered afterwards to get to know one another better. Of note, the men greeted and introduced themselves with a handshake, a custom I have rarely observed among the mixtures of students on the STU campus. Similarly, Valenzuela (1999) found that by convening small discussion groups, social capital can foster the

development of trust and expectations in sharing goal orientations toward schooling. *Social capital* is defined by its function in network structures:

> It comes into being whenever social interaction makes use of resources residing within the web of social relationships. Exchange relationships thus constitute social capital when they enable the attainment of goals that cannot be attained individually. (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 27)

For the small group sessions, I heeded Valenzuela's (2000) advice: "Students' *cultural world* and their *structural position* must also be fully apprehended, with school-based adults deliberately bringing issues of race, differences and power into central focus" (p.109). In starting each group session, I explained that our discussion would be shaped by three overarching topics: (a) the structural positions of working class versus middle class; (b) cultural and language concerns among students; and (c) suggested improvements in order to recruit and better serve students, specifically Latino/as at STU.

Not surprising to me, the participants expressed regard for the other members' responses. After the sessions, although they needed to move on to classes or to their jobs, they wanted to linger to ask questions of each other and to hear more stories. Even a week later, they found me, ready to member check and further probe their responses. As Olneck (2004) explained, "The views in which students and teachers hold for one another significantly shape the degree, quality, and consequences of interactions and the views the students come to hold of themselves" (p. 386). Although all of the teacher candidates did not share the same viewpoints, reciprocal understandings emerged during the group sessions. For these 7 teacher candidates, "Schooling offers models and possibilities of less burdened and constrained lives, and greater empowerment and equality, but it has posed them with highly charged conflicts that are not easy to resolve" (Olneck, p. 390). Without full awareness on my part, critical pedagogy was enacted. In becoming aware of

the positions they inhabited and the locations from which they spoke, the teacher candidates and I were better able to take responsibility for our beliefs and actions (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996). Dialogue and reflection served as agents for change (Giroux, 1992; Pizarro, 1999, 2005) as evidenced in Destiny's remarks:

> Reading my portrait and the other stuff was good for me. I read everything. It was all true. I cried. I had forgotten how hard it's been. It [this study] has changed me. But I'm almost ashamed to say it, because I wasn't feeling very motivated. But now I realize I've got to keep motivated to finish [my education].

Intersections: Endangered Lives

As I listened to the participants' stories, I was struck by the multitude and magnitude of complex problems that entangled their daily lives and choked their progress toward academic goals. These troubles included a burned home because of drug-related arson, no child-support, legal wrangles and welfare woes, extensive night hours at jobs, a stolen wallet, unreliable transportation, no credit card to pay for test registration, minimal funds to cover a check, inability to purchase textbooks or laboratory kits, and brothers in trouble. Having never confronted such troubles, I felt ill-equipped to advise them. Each problem had escalated and evolved while complicating the stresses on the teacher candidates. Spindler and Hammond (2000) and Spindler (2006) addressed such difficulties, coining the term *endangered self* to denote formidable challenges,

> engendered by unresolvable conflicts between *situated selves* and *the enduring self*. The conflicts may be of long duration or of short span. They may be entirely conscious or quite murky. …Examples of endangerment are marriages that become intolerable, of children in schools to which there can be no adaptation, of groups or gangs of people that one cannot abide, of jobs that seem to suck the life out of one. (Spindler, 2006, p. 67)

In fact, Spindler explained, "The endangered self may be a decisive factor in whether or not goals and tasks can be achieved" (p. 67). This construct of endangerment, although

not applied elsewhere in the literature to academic perils, seems indeed appropriate for case study analysis here.

Beyond stresses looming over their personal lives, 3 of the 7 teacher candidates faced another challenge during their junior year. Their opportunities to advance as teacher candidates were impeded—endangered—by their repeated failure to pass the math section of the THEA exam. Attaining passing scores on all three sections of the THEA is a requirement for eligibility into the professional block courses and student teaching at STU (and at most Texas universities). Although Susan, Joey, Klarissa, and Constance had the necessary math skills to pass the THEA on their first try, this was not the case for the others. Consequently, Theodore, Louis, and Destiny faced being blocked from continuing in the teacher education program as well as stymied in their hopes to graduate.

"Sweat and tears" was no exaggeration in describing the efforts of these 3 preservice teachers during their spring semester to overcome years of inferior or missed math instruction. As Spindler (2006) described, the element of self-conflict for these people escalated between their situated self positioned at an academic crossroads and their enduring self aspiring to become a teacher. Humiliation, frustration, worry, fright, and anger at their own schooling limitations were their expressed emotions before and after tutorials and failed attempts to pass the test. They did not fault the requirement; however, ensuing worries wondering how to rectify their math shortcomings sapped their energy and their will. It was very difficult for them to add additional tutorials to their already overscheduled days, all the while moving from classes to jobs to family

responsibilities. Specifically, Destiny took issue with the STU Math Department faculty, who she believed did not provide sufficient and reliable tutorial instruction:

> I say, "Okay what do I do now?" …I've been taking the THEA test [three times] and I can't pass it. I've been to tutoring. I stay there for an hour, an hour and a half. The other day I stayed 2 hours, and I still can't pass it. …What did I make an A or B in college algebra? …This tutoring is not working for me.

Outside of inadequate math skills preparation, Louis' academic status also was imperiled due to a commitment to his athletic scholarship and the necessity to work. Similar were Joey and Louis' sports histories, but strikingly different were their partial athletic scholarships to college. After graduating with top academic honors in high school, Joey believed that his decision to live at home rather than move to a campus dormitory or apartment helped him to stay focused on grades and sports. He completed his 4-year commitment to baseball at STU. During his 5th year at STU, Joey completed student teaching while serving as the assistant baseball coach to pay off his tuition debt. Joey will graduate with honors.

In contrast, Louis floundered in academics during high school but was "saved" by sports, choosing to play baseball at two other colleges before enrolling at STU. He admitted his earlier inattentiveness to academics:

> The crowd in middle school (shakes head), that's where I got into gangs, trouble, not drugs but cigarettes, beer; I did smoke pot. It was a lot of peer pressure…In elementary, I was dedicated and focused. I started changing, you know, the girls were changing (laughs). I thought it was cool *not* to do homework. I just cared about getting by with my grades. I just cared about playing sports. If it meant getting 70, I was happy with that.

Louis' academic self, in particular, became endangered at STU. Louis' grades were jeopardized as he juggled academics with his responsibilities to care for a girlfriend, a baby daughter, and two teenage brothers at home. Meanwhile, he worked as much as

possible at the grocery store job and served as captain of the baseball team, which often traveled to out of town games 2 days per week. When I inquired about sleep deprivation, Louis delineated his daily schedule:

> Well, I go all day to school, then at 2:00 p.m. either practice or games in the afternoons. On Mondays and Wednesdays, my last class ends at 2:45. I go to work at 8:00 and get off at 4:00 in the morning. Then I have to get up again at 6:30. I get close to 3 hours (sleep), but that's the only thing I can do right now. …I have to study during the day. …If I have had someone to fall on [depend on], I'd be a better student than what I am.

Since Louis was dependent on his partial athletic scholarship, he did not have the choice to drop any class for fear of a failing grade. He could not drop below the 12 credit-hour minimum in order to maintain sports eligibility and his scholarship. Consequently, Louis twice faced the embarrassment of making D grades—one of which was a D in algebra (the coursework most needed to pass the math section of the THEA). Different from the other 6 participants in this study, who are all honor students with a 3.5 GPA or higher, Louis' participation in sports enabled him to get into college but demanded a huge toll of time and energy, diminishing his ability to earn good grades. On the other hand, his personal hardships heighten the support Louis readily gives to teenagers in the middle school special education unit where he interns.

Academic Triage

As a follow-up to academic endangerment, I discussed these concerns with my STU colleague, Dr. Vanessa Davis, who member checked my interpretations of data findings. I was enlightened by her expanded thoughts on endangerment. Dr. Davis uses the term *academic triage* to explain the necessary steps effective professors at STU must take to assess and diagnose students' emotional, social, and basic academic needs, before

attending to subject content and their critical thinking skills. Arguably as important as the content is the professor's role to help students improve their developmental reading and writing skills. For example, Dr. Davis spends much additional time explaining how to write argumentative or persuasive papers and how to conduct electronic research for her American History assignments. Generally, such writing and research skills are taught to honors and college-bound high school students but seldom taught to students enrolled in regular-track classes. Although Dr. Davis previously taught at three PWIs before choosing to teach at STU to further her interests in civil rights, she remarked that she has facilitated academic triage to academically endangered students more often at STU than with students at any other institution. She explained, "Before I can move into the content, I must first assess then address the biggest issues, which may not be related to academics or classwork."

A Twist in Study's Focus

What continued to surface during the study were anecdotes of how financial disparities encumbered the teacher candidates' abilities to complete their education. The stories never were told to gain sympathy from me or others in the group session, but rather were shared in a frank, matter-of-fact tone. Indeed, participants' acknowledgement of the inevitability of hard times astounded me. Destiny explained, "It's made me have character—in a good way."

As this study continued, it became apparent that the socioeconomic issues were more problematic in these participants' experiences at STU than the cultural-ethnic issues that I initially thought would be the focus. Not that these participants did not identify some discrimination issues, but such data were mild in comparison to distressing stories

about determination amidst hardships. What I heard and observed echoed Valenzuela's (1999) explanation that the psychocultural domain is a broad category that emphasizes patterns of adaptation and qualities that working-class students possess as explanations for academic success. Students "are strongly driven to succeed and they adhere to traditional enabling values like familism, respect for teachers, and a strong work ethic, in their quest for mobility" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 11). The understanding at which I arrived was that the borders of socioeconomic class, with which these 7 teacher candidates struggled daily, were more troublesome than the borders splitting language or race.

> Educators hold dual class identities, one deriving from the class of origin and the other from their current occupational position as [prospective] teacher. In many cases, the two are not the same; in positional terms, teachers are considered middle-class. …For many, teaching is a means to improve social status. Thus, though teachers occupy a relatively "common station" in stratified society, they arrive from different places. (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004, p. 665)

The term *border crossers* is relevant to these individuals' lives, because they demonstrated the ability to understand and participate in various social and cultural realities or discourses (Anzaldua, 1987, 1999; Bartolome & Balderrama, 2001; Giroux, 1992)

Border Crossings: Situated Selves to Enduring Selves

Critical race theorists advocate acknowledging a multiplicity of realities in order to better expose and understand specific manifestations of interactions within the realities (Bowl, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1999). In doing so, I followed Spindler and Hammond's (2000) and Delgado-Gaitan's (1993) leads in using the interconnected concepts of enduring self and situated self as a psychosocial framework to examine the nature of changing realities. Understandably, each situation generally called for situational self-

adjustments; meanwhile, one's enduring self was adapting as well as enlarging (Spindler). Also, the construct of endangered self was explored briefly to highlight circumstances in the university arena that even the most committed preservice teachers find formidable. Spindler warned that the danger in using the concepts of selves, or with any constructs, is that they can become rigid categories into which analyses are forced. Such would be fatal by not giving due regard to the notions of fluidness, flexibility, growth, and the uniqueness of each individual.

By employing this psychosocial framework as participants told their stories, it was possible to build pictures of their enduring characteristics as well as of their lives situated within university experiences and adult responsibilities. For most, their stories about their field internship experiences helped them draw connections between what they had discussed in classes with their personal beliefs, background experiences, and future careers as teachers. Such critical dialogue afforded conditions for a pedagogy of *convivencia*—a praxis of relating and living together where all participants act as knower, learner, and teacher (Leistyna et al., 1996; Sharp, 2004; Villenas et al. , 2005).

Although these candidates' lives were stratified by race and class, their experiences (their situated selves) were building qualities and values that would fortify them in becoming effective teachers—qualities such as determination, kindness, commitment, interest in special-needs students and second-language learners, and willingness to give back to the community. Their abilities to crisscross the borders from working class to middle class and from a dominant African American university campus to mixed-race communities strengthened these teacher candidates' relations with different types of people. Like the border, the classroom became a transitory space, and within the

"web of the border" emerged a place of creative learning, the site of survival (McKenna, 2003, p. 248).

Conclusion

When this study began, the 7 participants were the prominent Hispanic teacher candidates in the STU teacher education program. I knew them to be intriguing, but now more than ever, I find their unique stories reveal experiences and qualities vital to becoming future exemplary teachers in public schools and significant for teacher-educators to better understand how to serve such candidates. Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) explained that the school and curriculum "can best inspire learning only when school knowledge builds upon the tacit knowledge derived from cultural resources that the students already possess" (p. 15). In this study, the group composite and individual portraits were not intended to represent an entire culture of Mexican American college students, but rather to illuminate the personal contexts of realities encountered by the 7 individuals selected. Nonetheless, I found these 7 participants to be representative of the other committed Hispanic students of whom I taught during my 25 years at STU prior to this study. As opposed to research with Latinos that strives to explain a deficit-different model for low scholastic achievement (Valdes, 1996; Valencia, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas et al., 1999), this study emphasizes an asset model, in which the Mexican American teacher candidates performed well academically and socially (Romo & Falbo, 1996; Thornton, 1999). Each candidate's desire to be the good student and a good citizen was embedded in the belief that a quality education was the pattern for a good life (Bowl, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999). These individuals' narratives play "a critical role in challenging

the deficit of mainstream thought about people of color" (Villenas et al., 1999, p. 48) at a university that predominantly serves people of Color.

From listening to their shared satisfactions and disappointments, contributions, and struggles within the campus culture and greater community, I moved forward into deeper analysis, as will be revealed in chapter 5. By critically examining our own perspectives and experiences, the teacher candidates and I engaged in critical consciousness, critical pedagogy. By critically examining our own perspectives, we tried to avoid the debilitating ramifications of relativism in which any and all cultural practices are equally acceptable (Pizarro, 2005). For example, after Destiny member checked the transcriptions of her second interview, she wrote on the last page,

> Please if there is anything I want people to take from this interview is that the "will" in many people is strong but life brings the changes in weather and sometimes it's hard to put both feet on the ground. So we are running like hamsters in a cage on their exercise wheel. Running but getting nowhere or at least that's how we feel. It doesn't mean we want to stop what we feel our "will" is.

From our conversations, we learned how these Mexican American teacher candidates traverse the borders of race, language, and class. I also learned that the 7 teacher candidates considered STU to be a special place and that they, too, were integral components in place making (Haymes, 2003; hooks, 1990, 1992). Even if offered other opportunities, all believed they would choose to remain at STU. They have found the STU campus somewhat like other universities but also distinctively helpful in its small-size enrollment and prevalence of African American interests and customs. In turn, I have found their presence has surely not harmed the veracity of this HBCU (C. Willie et al., 2006) but rather has added qualities of integrity to STU and, especially, to our classes and to my enjoyment as their teacher. Here, Giroux's notions of border crossers and emerging

hybridization apply. That is, the teacher candidates and I are "moving across borders that before seemed to employ customs agents…fusing the identities of the travelers with those with whom he or she travels and visits" (Giroux, 1992, as cited in Pinar et al., 2000, p. 853).

CHAPTER 5

EXPERIENCES OF BORDER CROSSERS

> *The aim is to understand or reveal how we "know" others—not fall into the trap of believing we can fully know or represent others as this leads to consumption of the other and the reduction of individuals' lives and beliefs into edible bytes.*
>
> bell hooks

Introduction

Through data collection, analyses, and writing of this study, I have attempted to "people our world" with honor and without exploitation (Coffey, 1999, p. 115). Within chapter 5 the analytic framework is briefly explained, but the crux of this chapter is the findings, which support a social justice agenda. In a social justice agenda, we can "measure and evaluate the strength of research in Chicana/o communities" (Pizzaro, 1999).

Valuing Hispanic Teacher Candidates' Own Words

As hooks (1992) poignantly explained in the introductory quotation, I cannot fully know or represent others. I interpret with a situated voice, because analysis cannot be separated from one's position as a member of a racial group, a social class, and a gender (Cary, 2003a, 2006). This position does not nullify the account but rather emphasizes that it is the author who "stages what s/he perceives to be the main events" (Menchaca, 2001, p. 11). Despite this attention to emphasis, Pizarro (1999) denounced educational research that continues to silence those studied and strengthens the researcher's position as the producer of knowledge. As a result, in this multiple case study, the emphasis was to value the world of college as seen through the eyes of Mexican American/Hispanic students, to

make known their personal knowledge, and to engage them in analyzing their stories. The emphasis was not on these students' failures but on their schooling successes (e.g., recognition as honor students and as effective student teachers, first-time passing scores on teacher certification tests, and immediate employment as teachers after graduation).

My purpose was to "profoundly and authentically" understand the Mexican American/Hispanic teacher candidates' experiences "from the perspectives of persons living them [and] through heavy reliance of the participants' own words" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 405). It was a collaborative process in which social and academic capital was created as relations and understandings developed (Stake, 2006).

Through this process, an ethnographer cultivates both closeness and distance in order for all participants to gain perspective and understanding of the cultural setting (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Yet, this path between familiarity and strangeness was far from straightforward (Coffey, 1999). Since, according to Coffey, "cultures are not in themselves homogeneous," who is the stranger or the member, the outsider or insider, is "much more blurred than conventional accounts might have us believe" (p. 22). So it is at STU. The Hispanic/Latina/o students have the minority status in terms of lower enrollment numbers; African American students are positioned as the majority.

Border Crossers in the Borderlands

At STU, the Black–White binary for analysis is not only faulty but helps obscure the lives and common struggles of African Americans, Latina/os, and Others seeking an equitable education. Today, the HBCU and its students exist at the crossroads, an intersection or web of borderspaces constituted by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, education, and ability (Anzaldua, 1999).

Whereas *borderlands* defines the HBCU as a site of resistance in the margins of higher education, *borders* can be defined as the convergence of cultural differences that serve institutionally to include or exclude students. *Border crossers* is a term that defines the complex realities of the junior- and senior-level Mexican American college students in this study. All of these teacher candidates have been resolute in their goal to graduate. Even though they have experienced or witnessed the "arbitrariness and unfairness" of cultural hostilities inside and outside the university domain (Bartolome & Balderrama, 2001, p. 62), a sense of survival and strength comes from their borderland experiences (Delgado-Bernal, 1999). Their uniqueness as Mexican American students at a HBCU has caused them to cross contradictory realities. The insights gained from these border-crossing experiences are not necessarily negative and, in many cases, are transformative or enriching (Anzaluda, 1999; Guajardo & Guajardo, 2002; hooks, 1984). In using borders as an analytical tool, analyses of the barriers can be deepened and can illuminate how to develop resistance to subordination (Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992, 2003; McKenna, 2003; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004).

By examining the 7 Mexican American students' insights and experiences at STU, this study illuminates how these teacher candidates are no longer are invisible or excluded from the HBCU story. Rather, the conversation is opened as this study challenges the limited information known about Latinos attending HBCUs and known about the programs that prepare preservice teachers of Color. The findings from this study support the Latino/a students in building their pride of place within STU. Findings also may be used to improve the program offerings for all teacher candidates to teach more effectively in a multicultural society.

The Enigma of the Black College

Seeking to see the familiar as strange, to see the ordinary as extraordinary (Coffey, 1999; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Spindler, 2006; Villenas, 1996, 2000), I asked questions about often-taken-for-granted aspects of the teacher candidates' lives within the college. After all, from my own experiences, I have found too many citizens assume that only Black people study, teach, or work at this HBCU. This untruth comes with a price. Whereas some students may prefer a one-ethnicity institutional environment, others believe a small homogeneous educational setting does not adequately prepare students for the workplace or society. The enigma of the HBCU is that all of its constituents are not African American. The HBCU label, therefore, signifies both an acknowledgment and a betrayal of the past, present, and future.

This untruth was experienced by the Mexican American students in this study. As Theodore put it, "My students are always asking me to tell them about [STU]. What do you do there? Why did you go to that school?" Constance related, "A lot of family asks me how it feels to go to a Black school. Even people off the street ask me. I tell them that I go to school with such nice, great people." Joey expressed his comfortable outlook: "Some of my friends were really surprised for me to go [to STU]. I didn't think it would matter. I knew I would get a degree. I made a lot of friends pretty quickly." For these college students, what mattered most was earning the degree.

When asked what it means to be a Mexican American student at a HBCU, most participants answered similarly to Joey's response: "Like any other student. It doesn't matter. I don't have to act any different." Theodore replied, "No different from other

colleges I've attended. I feel at home here…attending this college is like being a member of a close family"

Ironically, Susan recounted that she felt tension among the Latina/o students:

> Some of the Mexicans that are here may resent me, because the others have a stronger Mexico background. …If they hear me say "Hispanic," they'll see me as if I think I'm better than they are. If I walk down the hall and try to get eye contact with some Mexicans, they won't look at me. The younger Hispanics are more accepting.

Findings suggest that these Mexican American teacher candidates, because of their ethnicity, have not expected special consideration at STU. In fact, many recognized and respected the unique cultural dynamics at STU. Still, the younger participants—specifically, Louis, Klarissa, Joey, and Constance—hoped a greater number of Hispanics would be recruited to enroll at STU. The strength of the college in Klarissa's opinion is "the diversity." Only Susan expressed opposition to a change in demographics:

> After coming on this campus, I've learned more about experiencing a different culture. It's made a big impact on how I'm going to teach. But you'll want to keep the percentage of Others low, because [if not] you'll lose the African American experience. It will become the Mexican American experience. To be here with these friends is a gift, an honor.

Guided by Theory: A Framework of Multiple Methods

In this chapter, in order to increase confidence in the research findings and to counteract threats to validity, I followed the advice of Glesne (1999) and St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) to tap multiple methods, sources, and perspectives: Accordingly, "the richer the data, the more believable the findings" (Glesne, p. 3.). In building the analytic framework, it helped to visualize CRT as a stalwart tree with two major branches—borderlands consciousness (also known as Latina/o critical race scholarship) and critical pedagogy. The data was first analyzed using the tenets of CRT and then through the lens

of borderlands consciousness and critical pedagogy. Triangulation served (a) as clarification by identifying at least three ways the case (person, event, or program) was seen, (b) as an assurance that key meanings were not being overlooked, and (c) as recognition that the situation was more complex than it was originally thought to be (Popekewitz, 1999; Stake, 2006). Throughout the investigation, analyses were guided by moving back and forth between data and the literature.

Lens of Critical Race Theory

CRT was established as a movement and intellectual agenda to eradicate forms of oppression by challenging traditional notions of diversity and social hierarchy. Its venerable role is not simply to understand dynamics, but also to fashion arguments to change existing structures and systems (Tate, 1999). Since inception, CRT has offered guidance for examining how racial separations have "plagued our past and continue to compromise our hope for equitable education" (Taylor, 1999, p. 200). The specific tenets or defining elements of CRT were delineated by Tate (1997, 1999) and buttressed by others' scholarship (Hidalgo, 1999; HuDehart, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2003, 2004; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Taylor, 1999; Villenas et al., 1999). Although interrelated, each tenet reflects the goals to achieve racial justice and to provide guidance for dynamic and systematic inquiry. The three tenets are (a) recognize race intersections, (b) draw on experiential knowledge, and (c) interrogate power relations.

Tenet 1: Recognize Race Intersections

The first tenet is to recognize race intersections. A researcher must start from the premise that race and racisms are endemic in U.S. society; insist on contextual treatment;

and focus on intersections of race with other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexuality, language, culture, phenotype, and surname.

The constructs of race and racism are used as a category of analysis to interpret the social conditions of inequality and marginalization (Darder & Torres, 2003). It is vital, therefore, to emphasize that racism as a central construct intersects with other dimensions of one's identity such as class, generational status, health, and language. Questions get framed differently according to the dimension emphasized (Pinar et al., 2000). Each dimension not only can be subjected to different forms of oppression, but also "can elicit multiple forms of subordination" (Villalpando, 2005, p. 623). Furthermore, racisms are imbedded in the structures and policies that guide the daily practices of universities and U.S. higher education (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Taylor, 1999). Institutional racism often exists in higher education through standard operating procedures that advantage one group of people over a subordinated group (Scheurich, 1993; Scheurich & Young, 1997). For Latinos/as, racism is evidenced in how they are monolithically constructed as racial Others (Valdes, 1996).

Institutional racism. By virtue of their status at STU, the Mexican American teacher candidates are able to tell stories not usually heard or from a different perspective. Such counterstories became a tool to substantiate their real-life experiences within educational policy and praxis (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004; Villalpando, 2003; Yosso, 2006).

Questions during the first interview targeted pivotal events. One critical question focused on oppression: "While attending this college have you ever experienced incidents of discrimination?" From their stories, I learned these teacher candidates had at times

needed to play the "racist game" at STU. Although Theodore and Joey were reticent in acknowledging discrimination, 5 participants volunteered stories about their confrontations with staff at the offices of the Registrar and Financial Affairs. Disregard took the form of differential treatment provided to African American students but not to the Others. The students' experiences ranged from experiencing disrespect, to disgust, to feeling unwelcome at the highest levels of the university. As Constance related,

> There's no problem with the teachers but maybe with the registrar's and cashier's offices. Often I wonder, if I'm treated the same. I'm sure that I'm being ignored. Inside, I feel like maybe if I was Black, it would be different.

Whereas Constance suspected the prevalence of racism, Louis experienced it while at the Registrar's Office one day.

> I go into buildings and, pretty much, I always take my hat off. On this particular day, I forgot. The registrar refused to help me. She told me to take off my hat. I did. Then a Black guy walked up and he had a hat on and a do-rag! She didn't say anything to him. I was standing right there. I couldn't believe it. I just walked away.

Perhaps most discouraging is Susan's experience, which shows at the very least that the perception of racism extends to the highest levels of the university:

> [At] financial aid and registration, don't expect anyone to help you. I had to literally sit in offices, waiting hours and hours. …Don't expect it to be fair. They're two places where there's no fairness. …All students have to go to them. If you walk up and they're sitting down at the phone, having a personal conversation, they act like you've interrupted their conversation. They have an attitude.

Dealing with discriminatory acts requires attention to contexts, because most Americans of Color do not always react with the same strategy. An affronted person takes into consideration the situational context and the possible motivations of the oppressor. To counter hostilities, one develops a repertoire of strategies such as humor, silence, ignoring, or discounting the incident (Yosso, 2006). Alternatively, as may be the case with these Mexican American preservice teachers, the oppressed person holds

individualistic values that deemphasize the racist realities of society. He or she realizes "the necessity of not allowing racism to paralyze one's life" (Feagin & McKinney, 2003, p. 132). If possible, they may overlook small acts of discrimination, if only because attending to small acts would not help them attain their goals. Another reason Mexican American students may downplay racism at STU is that they realize African Americans have been victims of unfair power relations and hostile attitudes, partially stemming from a long history of oppression. Quite possibly, finding racism in a predominantly African American educational setting is similar to "blaming the victims" (Feagin & McKinney, p. 12).

When asked how they handled their frustrations about the realities of racism at STU, the teacher candidates offered an array of resistance tools. Constance said, "Patience! I just stay calm." Louis replied, "I just walk away." Joey lifted his shoulders to shrug off abuse and said, "I ignore it." "I've tried to become thick-skinned," answered Theodore. Susan was less tolerant and more attuned to taking a role to help empower the Others:

> I'm an advocate for the students. I'm a mom figure [at STU]. I feel so strongly about the inequalities I see. …You don't know this, but…[evasively, Susan pauses then changes to tell another story] Once the recruiter told me there were no scholarships, "We don't have anything available." I told her, "I know you do, because I've gone online and seen them. You can make it easy or difficult for me." She meant there were *no* scholarships for *Mexican Americans*. She was surprised that I knew so much.

hooks (1992, 1995, 1999) has pointed out that rage is a potentially healthy, potentially healing response to oppression and exploitation. She has suggested that activists (teachers) must show how to take such rage, move it beyond scapegoating, and link it to a passion for justice and a redemptive struggle. From my vantage point, I never witnessed the teacher candidates' anger turned to vindictiveness. Rather, they described

the importance of "choosing one's battles," as Klarissa put it, since they did not have the time or energy to tackle subtle oppressions. Their resistance to injustices and efforts to increase control over the environment materialized through their intense efforts at studying and working (Feagin & McKinney, 2003).

The teacher candidates' stories about racism at STU countered my own experiences. My interactions always have been cordially received by staff at the Registrar's and Financial Affairs' offices. No doubt, my faculty position has afforded me less controversy than the status of student. After hearing about confrontations with staff members in these offices, I conferred with several administrators. To my dismay, they replied, "When staff is willing to work for such low wages, you need to understand service might be sacrificed" (Fieldnotes from personal communication, March 13, 2005). Such a comment marks dysconscious racism, an uncritical habit of mind (King, 2004).

Impact from this type of discrimination in which higher level authorities are complicit or "make light of" prejudicial acts, can be detrimental to students (Feagin & McKinney, 2003, p. 17). Institutionalized racism can be intentional or unintentional. Both are defined as follows: Direct institutionalized discrimination is intentionally built into organizations to have a significant negative impact on subordinated groups. Examples include limiting resources or exclusion from organizations. Indirect institutionalized discrimination involves negative or differential treatment of subordinated groups, without the treatment being intentional, even though it can be damaging. Feagin and McKinney offered as an example, "The good Mexican…You speak good English" (p. 101).

From these descriptions of institutional racism, I heeded conversations with Klarissa and Constance, which revealed feelings of belonging and not belonging (Elenes,

2003; McKenna, 2003). For example, appealing to Klarissa was a possible affiliation with a campus sorority to develop closer friendships. Yet, Klarissa felt herself to be an outsider.

> I've been playing with the idea [to join a sorority]. My African American friend told me, "If you pledge, you'll be a legend." It seems fun to have a sisterhood. The whole process seems unfair…creates walls…I feel like there's no way I can be a part of that.

Constance's love of dancing prompted her to join the university-sponsored dance team, but the team's emphasis on Black hip hop as well as the time conflicts finally persuaded her to quit.

> I tried the dance team here my first semester. Many of the dances were more hip hop. There was one phase when all five songs were Beyonce's. I started saying, "What's going on?" …I hung in for a long time, but I had to get a job. …The practices were always at night. That didn't work for me.

Hence, I queried administrators to gain my own perspective as to whether sororities and curricular activities at STU were welcoming of all students. After conversing with two sorority sponsors and the student leader of the dance team, I surmised that STU organizations mistake their "welcome" as sincere. Their efforts, in my opinion, are not persuasive: From a sponsor I heard, "We had *one* Hispanic initiate last year in the sorority." The leader of the dance team said, "If *you* see Constance, tell her to come back." Both attitudes seemed tokenisms, and neither attitude convinced me that the members of these STU organizations view difference as an asset to genuinely support diversity within the membership.

Over time, even minor oppressive incidents will have a cumulative impact on individuals' participation in their communities. Disregard stemming from institutionally sanctioned acts not only may impede an individual's efficacy, but also can translate into negative perceptions about the university (Feagin & McKinney, 2003). Pizzaro (1998)

contended that the "university is playing a critical role in continuing oppression of the Chicana/o community as it does nothing to confront the ways in which it supports both unconscious and blatant manifestations of racism" (p. 58).

Racism in sports as an extension of racism in society. As athletes representing STU, Klarissa, Joey, and Louis described racial slurs so commonplace that they had come to believe them to be an everyday aspect of athletes' lives. Since their youth, sports were key to their development and identities. Klarissa said, "Sports have always been an acceptance part of me, helping me get to know people and helping people get to know me." For both Joey and Louis, the opportunities to play college-level sports and the enticement of a partial athletic scholarship convinced them to enroll and persist at STU. Although not in the same year, both Joey and Louis took the helm as team captain, and in his 5th year, Joey served as an assistant coach. Klarissa came to STU on an academic scholarship. After she "started missing volleyball," Klarissa joined the volleyball team. She proved to be a contributing player and even contemplated becoming the team captain. Instead, she left the team before her senior year to take care of her terminally ill grandmother and complete student teaching.

At STU, the 3 teacher candidates experienced racism both on and off the field. Klarissa recounted how African American members on her team accused the White coach and non-African American players of racism.

> Players are saying the coach is racist. The problem is the girls think the scholarships will be given to White girls. They can't accept that White girls are on the team. They wanted to keep the team all-Black. I'm here to win.

Louis and Joey experienced racist slurs on the field and directed at the entire team by opposing players and fans. "They call us [baseball team] the ghetto. They're always

saying, 'You go to school in the G-H-E-T-T-0,' making a big deal about the school being on the east side." Louis cited a variety of derogatory comments heard during games.

> When we [baseball team] go places, we get told a lot racist things…because we're a Black college …[STU] is always made fun of like [uses a mocking tone], "Where's the Black people? Why all Mexicans?" And they make fun of Hispanics, like, "Why are all of y'all so short? Where did you recruit, in Mexico?"

The glaring disparities of resources at HBCUs were especially visible to Klarissa. It was impossible for her not to draw comparisons after traveling to various HBCU campuses to play games.

> With the team I've traveled to other campuses. I'm amazed at the [name of college] facilities; they're very nice. But at [name of college], it's a ghetto with rats and stinks. After seeing that, I said, "I'll never again gripe about STU."

Most apparent is the paradox that a HBCU like STU, because of its dire financial restraints, rarely can challenge the existing social order and therefore reinscribes conditions found in the dominant society (Anyon, 1997; Apple, 1979; Finn, 1999; Freire, 1968; Kozol, 1991). Inequities include inferior or inadequate facilities, limited equipment and travel opportunities, players' access to only one trainer, and low-salaried coaches. Such glaring conditions arise because STU, like many small colleges and HBCUs, operates on a limited budget and restricted funds. Since most intake monies have designated purposes according to federal or foundation guidelines, there is minimal discretionary money to improve facilities and expand student opportunities. HBCUs simply do not attract much corporate sponsorship, commercial endorsements, or strong financial support from fans and alumni donors.

Regardless of limitations in the STU sports programs, Joey and Klarissa scorned insubordination on the part of fellow players. Joey saw no reason why some athletes showed minimal respect for their coach: "I come from a disciplined program where I

would never talk back to an authority figure. …[At STU] it was the first time for me to be exposed to that…I'd never do that." Likewise, Klarissa appreciated the expertise of the White coach but felt teammates' criticism caused a loss of practice time and lowered team morale. She said, "The coach is also a certified referee. …He knows the game. But the others [shakes head]—I can't understand why he is ever questioned."

As Anzaldua (1999) indicated, Chicana/os have two choices—to feel victimized or to feel strong and in control. From our conversations, I learned that while at STU these 3 athletes have deepened their conviction to take control of their own lives. Despite shortcomings in the sports programs, when asked to identify the advantages or strengths of STU, all 3 teacher candidates expressed pride in their participation. Klarissa and Louis's comments were echoed in Joey's response, "A strength? ...The chance to play at the collegiate level!"

Psychological or physical stress and welfare assistance. Living in intersections defined by race, class, ethnicity, gender, education, and abilities, these teacher candidates' lives are aggravated by a lack of financial security that sometimes manifests in psychological or physical maladies. Despite the potential of financial loans, particularly the low-income mothers face greater financial barriers than do most college students (Bowl, 2003; Sharp, 2004). It seems welfare policies historically have functioned and continue to enforce a cruel legacy of dispirited mothers, holding them in a state of fear by threatening to yank benefits for small infractions. "It is little wonder so many poor women have compared the welfare system to a brutal cop or abusive husband" (Ratner, 2004, p. 72). This type of hostility is revealed in Destiny's story.

> My finances are horrible….so much stress, tensions. I hate going to the food stamp office. It's the way they treat you. Every time I go, they say the same

> questions and tell me to sit at the same table to fill out the same paperwork. It makes me so mad. …I need to buy another car but I can't, if I'm on food stamps. …I think about my son, 'cause I don't get child support. I worry about food…my insurance payment...the light bill, the rent, the car.

Susan also expressed resentment at having to endure racist indignations and deeply regrets having to continue to ask for welfare assistance. The medical costs incurred, due to the lack of insurance during her second son's illness and subsequent death from leukemia, caused Susan to quit work and to need welfare assistance.. With frustration, Susan explained,

> It's the Mexican American stereotype. It's everywhere…Like when I'm filling out forms for welfare stamps, they act like I don't know anything. In my mind I think, "You have no idea." I always have to say something that will shock them.

No matter whether environmental, cultural, social, economic, or historical, such stressors are translated through the mindset of the people targeted and in turn generate negative physical consequences (e.g., problems with sleep, hypertension, or headaches). What is more, there is often a multiplier effect from recurring hostilities on a person's work and social relations. The psychological responses to racisms may take many forms, ranging from anxiety and frustration, to a sense of fear or hopelessness, to anger or bitterness (Feagin & McKinney, 2003).

I especially worry about how complexities in the teacher candidates' lives, especially the lack of finances, at times endanger their health. For example, Destiny became very anxious about problems incurred from missing classes and work. She assumed that she twice contacted pink-eye during the semester from customers at the photo lab where she worked. Additionally, Destiny endured neck pain from the injury sustained when her "stupid" car was rear-ended by a city bus driver. Having no choice but to be absent from classes and work, Destiny wrangled with disgruntled professors and

lowered paychecks. Plus, she confronted related stresses of no reliable transportation and of costs of medicine, chiropractic therapy, and the legal services necessary to recoup some compensation for the car accident.

Most alarming was Susan's last pap smear, in which cancerous cells were detected. Susan felt she had no recourse except to delay for a year the scheduling of a full physical examination and the doctor's diagnosis until after she accepted a teaching position and acquired some insurance coverage. Yet, Susan downplayed the possibility of having cervical cancer, although I am well aware she was hiding this fear.

Just as for many working-class Americans, these teacher candidates continue to endure psychological stress linked directly to limited financial security, etched in inadequate housing or unsafe neighborhoods and insufficient health care. McKenna (2003) stated that a consciousness of living in the borderlands is a useful tool to understand the discomfort that the students (border crossers) endure. As Louis remarked, "I would be different if I didn't have to work full time, paying the bills. I could focus more on school. …If I had basically someone to fall [depend] on, I'd be a better student than what I am."

Tenet 2: Draw on Experiential Knowledge

The second tenent of CRT is to draw on experiential knowledge. Researchers must value explicitly the experiential knowledge of people of Color as legitimate, appropriate, and critical for understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination.

For this section, analysis first linked CRT experiential knowledge to the constructs of funds of knowledge and of social or cultural capital. Next, findings were

separated into two categories: (a) experiential knowledge valued by the university and (b) experiential knowledge drawn upon to teach about subordination**.** During the interviews, no question specifically addressed the participants' understanding of racial subordination. Nonetheless, subsequent conversations provided insights to address CRT Tenet 2: "What background experiences do you bring to teaching?"

Funds of knowledge: social and cultural capital. CRT's high regard for experiential knowledge closely aligns with the construct of funds of knowledge as delineated by Moll and Gonzales (2004) and the constructs of social and cultural capital as explored by numerous scholars (Anyon, 1997; Bartolome, 2003; Elenes, 2003; Freeman, 2005; Freire, 1968; Knapp & Woolverton, 2004; Ladson-Billings,1994; Luttrell, 2003; Nieto, 2002; Olneck, 2000; Pizarro, 2005; Valdes, 1996; Valenzuela,1999; Villenas, 1996, 2000). Funds of knowledge "is often a matter of making the most of scarce resources and adapting to a situation in innovative and resourceful ways" (Moll & Gonzales, 2004, p. 703). Funds of knowledge theory capitalizes on those experiences that students have gleaned from their family, community, and workplace, which most middle-class teachers do not consider critical for social mobility and higher education (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ybarra & Lopez, 2004). In this study, the participants discussed such values as storytelling, sense of humor, and music, which sometimes are muted or ignored by teachers in public schools (Cortes, 2004; Franquiz, 2001; Giroux, 1992; Greene, 1996). Unfortunately, too few educators understand how the arts, stories, humor, and music can serve as countertexts to challenge and transform institutional racism (Anzaldua, 1999; Yosso, 2006).

In the following excerpt, Susan juxtaposed Spanish to English, explaining the cognitive gap that occurs when imagery is vivid in Spanish but mundane in English.

> I heard the men telling their story. It was funnier in Spanish than if it had been told in English. ...It's the way you say the word…just from the tone. *Mi corazon* can mean heat, or lover, or even my heart aches. And the music is a prime example of a play on words. When you grow up in that culture, well, the Spanish words are more heartfelt, but then, the child has to write the story in English. Like the child writes, "I am sad" but thinks "My heart melts."

Susan has recognized what Ybarra and Lopez (2004) have demonstrated: "Oral and written discourse serves not only as a cognitive and linguistic frame but also as an ideological schemata for viewing the world" (p. 96). Moreover, Mexican American children may see school as trying to change them (Cummins, 1996). Teachers must be aware that in teaching English and writing strategies, they are suggesting a change not only in a child's discourse patterns, but also in the child's identity, culture, and ways of seeing (Ybarra & Lopez).

Often used interchangeably, the terms *cultural capital* and *social capital* are related but also particular in meaning. Cultural capital, or cultural wealth, refers to specialized learned behaviors, attitudes, or artifacts that make one accepted within specific groups and at different levels of society. From our conversations about family traditions, Susan related, "If a grandma makes tamales, you're expected to know how to make tamales. ...I say, I'm not putting my hand into a hog! ...But I'm going to learn how to make tamales. I will."

Social capital refers to relations among persons and the resources that stem from having important social networks that cannot be individually acquired. As Louis related, "I'm just beginning to realize how much I got from my family" that he hopes to pass on to the next generation.

> My grandparents taught us to learn from our mistakes. Even when I wrecked my uncle's truck, he told me, "Learn from your mistake." I was embarrassed. I cried, but he told me to learn something from it. …My grandparents never made money an issue. We were poor but we always had enough. …I hope that I make an impact on my daughter like they made on me.

Within the academy, these constructs have surfaced because institutions and schools have tried to remedy working-class students' "deficit knowledge" without valuing the experiential and cultural knowledge the students already possess (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 59). CRT scholars view the official knowledge of institutions as a "master script" designed to maintain the dominant social order and distort or ignore the knowledge of the Others (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 59). Instead, teachers should build on students' funds of knowledge, their capital, through culturally relevant pedagogy and practices that are self-empowering (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001, 2004; Nieto, 2002). Building culturally sensitive learning environments entails viewing the classroom as a third space—a creative space that is "both and neither the home and school" (Villenas & Foley, 2004, p. 215). It is a "hybrid" space for capitalizing on cultural or linguistic production (Villenas & Foley, p. 217), but "few, if any, teacher preparation programs systematically prepare such teachers" to implement culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 60).

Experiential knowledge valued (not valued) by the university. Foremost, the participants in this study are willing, but at their own discretion, to contribute to class discussions at STU. They disdain being patronized as representatives of the Mexican culture and perspective. In fact, being singled-out in classes to serve as a resource and to test his acuity was the major reason Theodore stopped his studies at a flagship university in Texas. "It might be different today, but I would be in a big auditorium with lots of

people and the professor would keep calling on me. I looked around and thought, 'Why is it always me?'"

These teacher candidates respond more favorably to faculty who have done their own homework and brought to lectures and discussions their own found information about the culture and the struggles embraced by Mexican Americans. In the next story, Constance reflected her exasperation with a STU professor who seemed patronizing or disingenuous when calling on Latino/as in class.

> Ugggggghhhh! It was so ridiculous. There were only two Hispanics in the class: me and Carlos. Always, the teacher would call on us to explain anything that was Mexican…anything Mexican related. He never stopped. Sometimes people in the class knew more Mexican facts than I did. It was like I was the Hispanic poster child! And in one of the reading classes, they were talking about hip-hop music. They started asking me who were the hip-hop Mexican rappers? I swear every head turned toward me, but I didn't know.

On the other hand, Joey took a different, more welcoming stance about being used as a reference in STU classes. "Hmmm. I've never thought of it that way. I like to tell students about me, my family, what we do. I think it's important to be personable…let them know about my life."

What became clear from our discussions is how the teacher's first responsibility is to learn about the Others' histories, heritages, and cultural traditions. Second, the teacher must try to build a relationship with students before spotlighting particular students or inviting their input. The students must hear the teacher extend respect before they are willing to teach Others. Ladson-Billings (1994, 1998, 2001) further explained that culturally relevant pedagogy also requires the teacher to build a social justice agenda on the students' behalf.

Fortunately, the small community at STU, specifically the teacher education program, provides opportunities for many students and professors to value each others'

experiences and to build social justice agendas. When asked to identify the university's strengths, the other study participants echoed Destiny and Joey's responses. Particularly Destiny was attuned to the quality of the STU faculty and their contribution to her education no matter their idiosyncrasies.

> What I love about STU is the small campus, the one-on-one interactions. …Mr. B. was a good teacher. And you might not believe this, but I really liked Dr. K. I found him to be a very good teacher.

Joey felt he benefited from the small community ethos, especially from the help of other preservice teachers who shared insights about working with students and coaches in their field assignments.

> We're close knit, comfortable. …Professors are available. Classmates always helped each other out. The key was that we gave each other ideas. …We understand each other.

The function of cultural or social capital is the value of aspects that can be used to realize the group or individual's interests. Capital is created when the behaviors or relations among persons change in ways that facilitate action or resources. Different capital contributes to the adaptation process as well as leads to very different outcomes.

No doubt there are numerous incidents where, through their experiential knowledge, these 7 teacher candidates have contributed to fighting subordination at STU. Even though it is not these teacher candidates' nature to self-aggrandize, here is just one example where Susan relied on her past experiences to inform and fortify other STU students with the tools to negotiate the system.

> I was a registrar for many years. I know their job. Every time I get in line, I'm on guard. I've seen them make students cry. When the student asks, I don't understand why they can't do it right. I tell students, "Keep up the paperwork. Don't expect anyone to help you. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't expect it to be fair."

All students bring capital with them, which in turn, helps to shape the other students' experiences (Freeman, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Moll & Gonzales, 2004). For instance, Constance believed STU's educational setting and predominantly African Americans students have enhanced her education. Constance said, "What I've gotten [from African Americans] is advice. I've learned more about stereotypes. The assumptions some people make aren't true. Black students and teachers know a lot about life and have lessons to share."

In summary, no specific question was asked of the participants to explore how the university values these Mexican American teacher candidates' experiential knowledge. However, findings suggest these teacher candidates' experiences at STU have caused them to work against subordination—their own and the Others'.

Experiential knowledge to draw upon to teach about subordination. The dynamics of experiential knowledge help us to recognize the assets teacher candidates choose to hide or share in order to negotiate experiences at STU. Having acquired extensive experiences from their families, different types of schooling, and the workplace, these teacher candidates' lives demonstrate multiple challenges that they have had to overcome. In turn, these experiences will help them teach in multicultural communities and give support to their students, especially those students facing racist and classist subordination. None believe teaching will be an easy job, but then their lives have not been easy.

"In the field of higher education, an analysis of research and practice requires that the experiential knowledge of people of Color be centered and viewed as legitimate and as a resource critical to understanding racial subordination" (Vilalpando, 2003, p. 623).

Ladson-Billings (2005) argued against "trying to create teachers through teacher education"; instead, "teachers need to come to teacher education with experience, empathy, and expertise in order to be prepared to teach in urban schools, serving large numbers of children in poverty and children of color" (p. 16). The next compelling excerpts reveal how these teacher candidates come with experiences that will serve them well in helping their future students confront subordination (Luttrell, 1993). Of interest was Destiny's quiet acknowledgment of her own problems with deafness as a child. When Destiny and I discussed her concerns about a first-grade boy whom she was tutoring, I suggested that Destiny consider if he might be hard of hearing, since the boy was unresponsive. With thought about her own childhood experiences, Destiny provided evidence that proved the boy could hear. She said,

> No, I remember that I heard him make a small response to something the teacher said. I don't think he could see her lips. Up 'til the time I was in third grade, I was a child who couldn't hear. I would read people's lips. I've probably had 12 or more surgeries. …Now, I can hear just fine.

Recalling his own family's tangles with racism and oppression, Louis showed limited tolerance for other STU students who freely made excuses and were unwilling to work. Yet, in classes Louis remained silent when issues of illegal immigrants came up, because he did not believe the professor or other students had empathy or understanding of what it means to be the grandchild of Mexican immigrants.

> Since I was 8 years old, I've worked in the fields. I've picked watermelons, cantaloupes, cucumbers, tomatoes. In my town in South Texas a lot of people are racist, but not with my grandpa. The ranchers were White, but they trusted him. We would pick, and he would stay in town and sell. …He taught me a lot of things. He was honest with his [immigrant] workers, and that's why they loved him My grandmother worked hard for a White lady in her house and also at her daycare. …They always said good things about my family. …That's who I am, I'm honest.

Joey believes in sharing his own life experiences with younger students in order to inspire them to want to go to college.

> When the kids say to me, "You must have been rich growing up," I tell them that one time my parents had a hard time on welfare when I was in high school, but we got out of it. It [welfare] was there for us when we needed it, but we didn't stay there. …If we could get that [point] across, we would get more kids [in college].

Wrestling in making the decision whether to become a bilingual teacher or a regular elementary teacher, Susan shared personal stories about hardships her own mother faced as a Mexican immigrant in Texas schools. Such hardships influenced both her mother and father's parenting skills and their relations with Susan's teachers, especially because they were poor.

> I started pre-K Head Start, but my mother pulled me out. Even though we were poor, my mother didn't like me identified as low socioeconomic status. …Her schooling experience was difficult. My mom would take tortillas to school and peers made fun of her. My mom only went to the eighth grade. Her parents pulled her out, because she was the oldest and there were five younger siblings to help care for. …My dad instilled a work ethic. He hardly gave us anything. We had to earn it. …Junior high was the worst. For me race wasn't a problem, more a problem of economics.

During this study, those candidates who were deeply entrenched in the field were the most vigilant in helping students (and students' families) cope with subordination. Keeping in mind his own experiences as a parent of four children, Theodore took care in explaining his concerns to the parents of a special needs boy who was disruptive in his class, while student teaching. Theodore wanted to inform the parents and to solicit their help. Theodore said, "My most difficult assignment was to interview the parents of a special needs child having trouble getting along. …I spent a lot of time to make sure my questions were considerate and respectful, not thoughtless on my part."

Drawing from his own memories of limited food on his family's table, Joey pushed acceptance and tolerance. He wants his students to look beyond school to

understand that respect for and friendships with different types of people are crucial later in life. He makes sure his players eat something healthy before a big game.

> When I hear my students using labels, I say, "You're lucky you're around these kids. You're lucky you're in this school. Learning how to be with different people will help you for the rest of your life, in business, in your career, forever." …Some students eat lunch and then don't eat again until the next day. …I always keep some oranges or apples around in the gym before a game. I say, "Hey, I don't know where those came from, but you'd better grab one." I can't see that I'll get in trouble with UIL for having an orange or apple to help them get to the next meal.

While Susan monitored Spanish-dominant students to give them full support, she also worried about a White child who was ostracized for being smart and privileged. The "red-headed" girl had been placed in the bilingual third-grade classroom on her mother's insistence. The mother hoped that the girl would be less bored in this class and also learn Spanish through immersion. Not feeling accepted by classmates, the girl resorted to speaking only Spanish with Susan or with one Spanish-dominant boy. As Susan explained,

> She's a very intelligent student: She does all of her math upside down. When she speaks Spanish, they think she's being a smarty pants. They will laugh at her. …I always tell them, "Hey! I think that she pronounced that word beautifully, a lot better than I could." I encourage her to speak Spanish…but the other children are like, "Naawww."

Critical and postmodern educators have defined racism as "prejudice plus power" (Omni, 2001). By employing this premise, they correspondingly have argued that "people of color cannot be racist since they lack power" (Omni, p. 287). Yet, racism is not that simple or straightforward, especially within a HBCU where the power-holders are African American.

Tenet 3: Interrogate Power Relations

Tenet 3 of CRT is to interrogate power relations. The researcher must question and challenge dominant ideologies of neutrality, colorblindness, assimilation, and meritocracy as camouflages for the self-interest of powerful groups in society.

The ambiguity but influence of power is best described in Richard Dyer's thoughts: "Power in contemporary society habitually passes itself off as embodied in the normal as opposed to the superior" (in hooks, 1992, p. 169). Furthermore as Ladson-Billings (2005) explained, this "culture of [normalcy] power has become an important conceptual rubric for researchers and, to a much lesser extent, teachers" and prospective teachers to use to understand the ways marginalized students have limited access to academic benefits (p. 131). Criticalists believe that everything is shaped by power, such as race, class, gender, religion, and ability. Power is unintentional and intentional. Power assumes a multiplicity of forms, locations, and functions. Even nonevents perpetuate the power structure. Power's effects can be either oppressive or emancipatory. Where there is power, there is also resistance (the tools to shift positions) (Banning, 1999; Cary, 2006; Foucault, 1990; Gutierrez, 2004; Pinar et al., 2000; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). This was nicely explained by Leistyna and Woodrum (1996):

> Educational practices and knowledge are always produced within particular social and historical conditions and therefore, an understanding of their production and dissemination must be accompanied by not only an investigation of their relation to ideology and power, but also an inquiry into the researcher's inherently subjective perspectives. (pp. 5-6)

With the influx of students, predominantly Latinos/as and students of working-class backgrounds, institutions like STU must rethink policies and practices to support a renegotiation of identities among the students. Students from diverse backgrounds, those who do not fit one cultural profile, also deserve their pride of place in the university.

To transform this diversity into a pedagogical advantage is the greatest promise and challenge for the future (Moll & Gonzales, 2004). In doing so, Cary (2006) reminded the reader that a humanizing pedagogy "does not remove power—it merely reinscribes it—uses it differently" (p. 9). As administrators and stakeholders rethink the policies and conditions at STU, along the way, the teacher candidates can occupy a central role in raising awareness about issues implicated in cultural transitions and transformations.

During the interviews, no question specifically asked participants to discuss their understanding of power relations, but through discussions such evidence emerged. In this section, an understanding of shifts in power is critically applied to evolving relations at STU. Acknowledged, also, is the interconnected relationship of power and ideology among participants and researcher. As revealed through the study participants' stories, attention also is given to ideologies (of meritocracy, race neutrality and assimilation), schooling practices (that appear neutral or standardized), and beliefs (about a teacher's SES). Findings include descriptions of power relations not only within the university but also in these teacher candidates' schooling experiences.

Researcher and researched power relations. Throughout this study, I have been cognizant that the fact of power cannot be negated. One can, nonetheless, undertake a resistance, by engaging with our students as persons "to affirm our own incompleteness, our consciousness of spaces still to be explored, desires still to be tapped, possibilities still to be opened and pursued" (Greene, 1996, p. 29).

Despite such good intentions, Ellsworth (1989), Goldstein (1997, 1998), and Villenas (1996, 2000) have discredited researchers' illusions that collaborative investigations can be equitable and mutual partnerships, especially while the researcher

both teaches and cares deeply about the students. Beyond this dilemma, Pizarro (1998, 1999, 2005) ranted against any research of Chicano/s that leaves them out of the analysis. Therefore, during the summer of 2005, the teacher candidates actively participated in the member-checking process as well as reviewed their individual case study profiles presented in chapter 4. From their written comments, I readjusted my views and dug deeper into the literature for guidance and clarity.

One group's gain is often viewed as another group's loss. As percentages and relations change among student populations constituted as Black, Brown, Biracial, White, and Other at STU, it is important to view power not as a "thing" but as a complex field of relationships, including the abilities to rule as well as resist (Omni, 2001). Critical ethnographers look at the web of power, how it plays out, and what is said and not said.

A starting point for dialogue among diverse groups is to acknowledge the historical and contemporary differences in power that different groups possess. The notion of difference is central, because difference grows out of the unequal power relations in society. Difference is the consequence of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and other prejudices (Giroux, 1992; Pinar et al., 2000). It needs to be reiterated that "power is both a constraining force as well as an enabling force" (Giroux, 2003, p. 53).

W. E. B. DuBois (1905/1994) explained that in the years after the Civil War, the powerful elites successfully manipulated the class resentments of White workers by redirecting the workers' anger and focus off the elites and toward the African Americans, Mexicans, and Asians. "White workers endured hardships in exchange for the security of

knowing that there would always be a group below them, that there was a floor below which they could not fall" (Lipsitz, 2005, p. 113).

Now, fast forward to today's rapidly changing demographics: African Americans sense they are losing power and influence while they observe the increasing Latino populations anticipate potentials for power (Larmer, 1999; C. D. Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004; F. R. Lee, 2003; S. J. Lee, 2005; NLERP, 2003). Omni (2001) pointed out a disquieting fact about the success of two legislative initiatives in California (Propositions 187 and 209). The "success" of these legislative actions, in Omni's opinion, was due to the framing of Latino/a interests counter to those of African Americans and, to a lesser extent, Asian immigrants. In these initiatives, political interests were not framed in reference to Whites but rather framed to exploit tensions among racial minority communities (Ignatiev, 1995; Olneck, 2004). For example, it was argued that Mexican immigrants were siphoning off social services that could help impoverished groups in the African American community. Hence, "one group's gain is perceived to be another group's loss" (Omni, p. 286).

Power relations within the university. The relations of power are reflected in the culture of the university (Villalpando, 2003). The *culture* refers to the structural organizations as well as to the collective role and ideologies that educators adopt in their relation to culturally diverse students through the curriculum (Cummins, 1996). The cultural performance (and the cultural subjects or students) is sociohistorically constructed and politically inscribed "through social interactions often involving experiences of domination and subordination" (Cary, 2006, p. 98). Historically, the

function of school culture has been to deal with diversity by ignoring it, or by forging uniformity and therefore negating difference (Moll & Gonzales, 2004).

As people interact with existing institutions, in order to realize goals sometimes they are stripped of the power to articulate their own views, languages, and behaviors. "For example, the effort in the U.S. to enforce *a common culture* or *a common sense* is in fact the imposition of a homogenizing social paradigm known as hegemony" (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996, p. 3). The concept of common culture rests on "an un-negotiated foundation of values, ethics, meaning, histories, and representation of cultural heritage" (Leistyna & Woodrum, p. 3). Such understandings become more complex when applied to a HBCU that strives to celebrate Blackness and in doing so obscures the Others—creating an unequal distribution of power along the lines of race and ethnicity. Overlook, disregard, or constraint comes in multiple forms such as limited access to student opportunities or organizations and the absence of Others via the curriculum, course offerings, and staff/faculty positions.

STU has little influence over the nature of the experiential knowledge that its students bring; however, the university "can influence what happens to students once they enroll, shaping the quality of students' experiences and their persistence in degree programs" (Sharp, 2004, p. 116). A closer study of Mexican American preservice teachers at STU suggests that tensions and power relations are entangled when their experiential knowledge and expectations clash with the institutions' expectations and actions. As examined within CRT Tenet 1, racist actions, under the auspices of university relations, were directed toward and conflicted with these teacher candidates' pursuit of

education and curricular activities at STU. Such power differentials impact the students' involvement and weaken the university's potential for growth.

Most telling is Klarissa's response, "For a small college, not many of the students' concerns are addressed." Her perspective is rooted in not seeing STU students "asked to the table" to participate in decisions and not seeing top STU administrators walk the campus, attend student activities and games, or make the effort to personally meet many students. Consequently, when students are not engaged in dialogue, they do not perceive themselves as valued. So too, Susan shared her frustrations, "I've come to the point that I wanted to go to the president's office, right there, to say how things are. But I don't think it would matter. There's something about him that I don't feel welcomed here." Louis echoed Klarissa and Susan's thoughts, "As captain, the other players have wanted me to go to the president, but it wouldn't do any good."

Recognizing the uniqueness of its student population, STU must work to serve its students through needed academic and social support and financial aid. On a positive note, the small STU campus does afford the students access to faculty, partially because degree programs are centralized by building locations. The university attempts to provide support and variety by offering day and evening classes, but with STU's small student enrollment, generally, it is not feasible to offer more than one section of a required class at the junior and senior levels. Also, it is not financially feasible to offer all required courses per semester, and sometimes courses are offered on alternate years. Particularly, the STU students who sustain themselves through employment off campus find it difficult to fulfill some course requirements and difficult to graduate within 4 years. For preservice teachers, as Constance said, "A lot of education classes require field

observations, and it's hard to find the time to go to the schools. And some classes are only available once a year." "That's one complaint I have," Theodore explained, "some students who come here are held captive, having to take required courses. …There needs to be more flexibility."

The cumulative effect of unequal power relations and lack of dialogue damages the concept of learning and academic freedom. When people believe their viewpoints are not heard, they are stifled and not fully engaged in critical thinking—the core value of higher education. If university students cannot deliberate to advocate for change within a relatively safe university environment, they will not be well equipped to do so in the workplace and sociopolitical environments. The university experience should function to generate knowledge within the space to practice these sociopolitical skills. Moreover, the faculty and administrators should model these behaviors. When power relations are perceived as unequal, not just the students, but also the faculty are impacted, because the effects close off the pathways in which faculty can understand their students and themselves.

The effect first narrows the potential pool of students for STU and then stifles the explorations of problems and solutions at STU. The students especially are constrained when they do not have opportunities to engage in meaningful exchanges that value their education and social status. By creating these power differentials (whether based on race, status of students and faculty, or status of the university), opportunities are closed rather opened to benefit both "the parts and the whole" of the institution (Colleague check, personal communication, August 20, 2006).

Race neutrality and assimilation practices. Neutrality and race-neutral or assimilation practices act as a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in American society (Heath, 2004). Said another way, the act of ignoring or assimilating a person's racial or ethnic differences into the majority group's mores is racism (Frankenberg, 1993). Just as at other institutions and workplaces, certain structural polices and conditions at STU can block opportunities for students who are marked as different but expected to adapt and assimilate. Possibly, such micro-aggressions are the result of systemic violence exerted by hegemonic norms and imposed by educational practices (Cary, 2006). Educational costs from systemic oppressions may range from issues of linguistic and cultural erasure to low levels of motivation based on student disregard or alienation (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003).

One way to question neutrality and possible oppressions at STU is to examine student organizations (Hurtado & Kamiunmura, 2003; Nora, 2003). Klarissa recounted how the social dynamics at STU seemed both welcoming and isolating at the same time. "You see sororities that look fun but seem closed," Klarissa shrugged, "It feels like you don't have that option."

It is one thing to face the usual stress of educational challenges, knowing there are some measures one cannot decrease. It is another matter to realize that the missed opportunities are largely beyond one's own control (Feagin & McKinney, 2003). Intriguing to me were the preservice teachers' notions of opportunities, particularly since Susan, Klarissa, and Constance are honor students. In the following anecdotes Susan and Klarissa expressed not feeling a part of the elite students who represent the university, but Constance rejected the invitation to try. Both Susan and Klarissa lamented that they had

attained a high level of educational success but only a low level of influence at STU. Susan noted, "If I was African American right now with my [high] grade point and my skills, I would have more opportunities [to represent the university]." Klarissa's curiosity impelled her to ask Lilly, an African American teacher candidate, about her exceptional opportunities and then saw the disparities as a return to the old "it's who you know system."

> It's like Lilly is always going places to another college or university. I said, "How do you get into that?" She said, "Well you have to know this person and that person." I thought it would have been neat to have been asked. …She's got connections. That's how you make it in life. It's about who you know.

Interestingly, not all of the preservice teachers embraced opportunities extended to them. When Constance was invited to run for Miss UNCF, she not only declined but also questioned the motivations behind the invitation. Constance felt tokenized as a "multicultural" add-on: "I guess they were looking for diversity."

Although neither wanted to evoke an erosion of STU's "Blackness," Theodore and Joey strongly recommended that the university hire recruiters who are both fluent in Spanish and understand the "culture of South Texas high schools" in order to increase the number of Mexican American students at STU. Once the students, the Others, transitioned onto campus, Theodore and Joey believed they should be supported in continuing to forge a community, which sustains an ethos that honors Blackness as well as a multiplicity of identities (Anzaldua, 1999). At this time, these particular Hispanic teacher candidates do not favor Latino-only groups for themselves but, then again, would not block that type of "additive" opportunity for the others.

Given the presence of Mexican American students at STU, one might wonder why there are no Hispanic-student organizations at STU. Would such organizations help

to establish a pride of place for Latina/o students on STU's campus? Theodore who helped me to understand why some Mexican American students do not need or want Latino/a-only groups for refuge (Lopez, 2004). When directly asked, "Do you and other Hispanics feel a pride of place on this campus?" Theodore explained, "I like others feel connected to the community. It is the largest part of my life—it's been a good thing."

The experiences of these students align with Villenas' (1999) *pedagogy of convivencia,* where praxis is promoted by relating and living together. Understandably, the greater the degree a person is integrated into the institution's fabric, the greater the likelihood that the individual will persist. Yet, Hernandez and Jacobs (2004) contended that a student's retention in college is both "tantamount to successful integration into the life of the academy and simultaneous dissociation from the student's community of origin" (p. 9). Moreover, I find it disturbing to learn from Hernandez and Jacobs that students of Color on White campuses commit a form of "cultural suicide," having to break with their communities and the culture in which they were raised in order to assimilate into the dominant culture of the college they attend (p. 10). In contradiction, the stories of these teacher candidates suggest that it is possible to pursue a college education without committing complete "cultural suicide." At no point have I sensed that any of these teacher candidates dissociated from their families and communities to attend STU. To the contrary, I have seen them include their girlfriend, boyfriend, children, wife, and family in their campus experiences. Such was the case when Klarissa's boyfriend accompanied her to basketball games and field internship assignments; Destiny brought her son to the university Easter Egg Hunt and on class field trips; and Theodore's son and wife joined us for the Teacher Educators Club Christmas party and spring banquet.

For these preservice teachers, "making it within a racist society [has] often required and at times still requires both accommodation and assimilation" (hooks, 2001, p. 23). The assimilationist tendency of institutions is to reflect a racialized construction of the "good citizen," "the good student," that "legitimizes regimes of the dominant and (thus), Othering those students who are visibly 'different' or 'raced'" (Cary, 2006, p. 104). The implication is that unity and compliance cannot be achieved if there is difference, because difference or diversity is seen as divisive and not as enrichment. Hence, it is the work of teachers to understand the advantages and disadvantages of accommodation and assimilation (Lopez, 2004) and not to "get stuck in the binary of assimilation or authenticity" (Cary, 2006, p. 103). In doing so, teachers and teacher candidates can learn to interrogate the repertoires of racism (essentialist racism, color-power evasiveness, and color cognizance) in order to develop and activate their own antiracist pedagogies (Frankenberg, 1993).

Meritocracy and mediocrity. To interrogate power relations within an institution's ideology of meritocracy, it is essential to first reflect on CRT writings in the literature. *Meritocracy* is the premise that a student's educational success is viewed solely as a product of his or her hard work, work ethic, and other types of student merit (Lopez, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). Regardless of evidence to the contrary, the university is cast as a meritocracy, causing "a range of students to believe that the playing field is level and those who excel do so by virtue of natural talents while those who fail are lacking" (Brantlinger, 2003, p. 7). In effect, such ideology denies or devalues the multiple complexities that can hinder success for college students striving to transition from lower economic to middle-class expectations (Bowl, 2003). Critical scholars have argued that

the meritocracy of American schooling subtly reinforces the idea that failure for certain individuals or groups is normal (Valenzuela, 1999) and "equate being poor with being worthless" (hooks, 2000, p. 45). Educators must resist also the temptation to believe that it is primarily an issue of hard work (meritocracy) and a lack of finances that keep the poor from escaping to the middle class. A high correspondence between class and race/ethnicity must be acknowledged (Brantlinger) as well as other contributing resources (emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, relationships and role models, and knowledge of hidden rules).

Critical educators have contended that schools actually work against the class interests of those students who are most economically and politically vulnerable within society (Apple, 2003; Darder et al., 2003; Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2004). "A lot of well-meaning people are doing the best they can, but they simply do not understand the mechanisms that stack the cards" against students (Finn, 1999, p. 94). They simply do not understand that the spirit of meritocracy subtly undermines those students who work hard but endure extenuating circumstances that cause poor results or failure (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004).

All participants in this study have been steeped in the belief that hard work is the deserved road to success and have subscribed to the ideology of schools and universities as meritocracies. After all, they have worked, and some are continuing to work, at jobs for minimal wage, always with the belief that a college education will offer more opportunities. Six of the 7 teacher candidates are honor students with a GPA of 3.5 or above. Joey is just one example of making it "while swimming against the current." Starting each workday at 5:00 a.m., throughout college Joey has processed microchips

and computer parts on an assembly line before classes and on weekends, while also maintaining a full course schedule and playing baseball. When compared to his employment in the computer industry, Joey highly values a teacher's autonomy in the classroom, the work hours, and the variety of students in different classes that change from year to year.

By acquiring higher education, these teacher candidates believe they are improving not only their own future, but also that of the next generations in their families. In our conversations, they complimented outstanding professors and good students at STU but showed little patience for some faculty who accepted mediocre work and excuses from fellow students. In their minds, meritocracy is inextricably lined to mediocrity (undistinguished or careless and inferior work or a lack of diligence and hard work). Moreover, these teacher candidates see that by some students and faculty tolerating mediocrity at STU, the practice breeds additional mediocrity and lowers morale. When asked, "What are the drawbacks or limitations of the university?" their responses ranged from a lack of challenging faculty to a lack of student preparedness.

Similar to other participants, Theodore explained, "It's important to have teachers first challenge you." Louis echoed this need for higher standards when he suggested that the university "be tougher. Hold students accountable for their actions. Help them to see they're hurting themselves. …Stand by what you believe" Susan also critiqued the low expectations of STU and the "false hope" engendered.

> Expectations are very low...from the administration to the professors. …It's in all of my classes…the professor does too much…puts false hope in these students. ...It's the low expectations of the school. …Somewhere else, at another college,…teachers would expect more work and accept no excuses…then students would be more prepared.

Joey faulted both the problems at STU of limited course offerings, particularly in summer school, and an admissions system that enrolls students underprepared for college. As Joey related, responsibility also lies with the students. Discussing his algebra class, Joey recalled, "Some kids don't belong in college. [They lack] academic skills. In my college algebra class, it was easy but some were having trouble. …I said, 'You have to study to learn.'"

What these students described is a campus ethos that actually works against the interests of those students who are most economically and politically vulnerable within society, as noted earlier (Finn, 1999; hooks, 2000; Knapp & Woolverton, 2004; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). This ethos of mediocrity is most dangerous when it creates a sense of academic fatalism. Destiny identified this danger when she explained, "One of the biggest problems is when some [faculty] think we're failures. Then again, both Black teachers and students accept the attitude that they are failures so they can't learn or do good work."

This type of fatalist attitude echoes Steele's (2004) work with college-bound students on *stereotype threat.* Steele suggested that the academic performance of racial and ethnic minorities is indeed impaired by negative stereotypes about their competency in school settings and specifically on standardized tests (C. D. Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004). Steele's work and data revealed that students of Color who are the most skilled, confident, and motivated also are most impaired by negative stereotypes about their abilities.

Stereotype threat is most pervasive in terms of certification testing. When discussed among the study participants as well as all of the STU teacher candidates,

certification testing seems to reveal substantial stereotype threat evidence. Indeed, the spirit of meritocracy is "alive and thriving" in the state's teacher certification accountability system, since most people believe that the exams can be readily passed simply through diligence in studying. Yet, teacher certification exams as with most standardized testing practices are "antagonistic toward the culture and lived experiences" of some students (Bartolome, 1996, p. 249). Luttrell (2003) argued that the knowledge of women of different races/ethnicities and of middle- or low-income status is not the same and can be traced to differences in their lives. Luttrell's scholarship focused on adolescent pregnant females but also suggested that similarities and differences vary among men of variant race and class. Luttrell explains how meanings that working class people of Color claim and attach to their knowledge provide them with unique lenses through which to filter information. To pursue this line of thinking about dual lenses, Theodore's perspective serves as one example. During elementary school, Theodore explained that he was punished if he spoke Spanish, because "it was rude." Today, Theodore agrees with the ideological change buttressing the state certification tests, in which second-language learners should be given support, not chastised. Yet, based on his tormented early experiences, Theodore "holds" misgivings about speaking Spanish in schools and "carries" these experiences to the certification exams. Like Theodore, working-class adults of Color face deep conflict between self-knowledge and the ideas and images promoted by the dominant society. This conflict embodies a "double-bind" as they pursue their education and "serves as a means of social control" (Luttrell, p. 166).

At STU, I am not interested in judging whether it is the African Americans or Mexican Americans who are the more stricken by their fear of failure on teacher

certification exams. Yet, I am deeply concerned for all teacher candidates of Color who are conflicted by omnipresent, insidious threats of state teacher certification examinations. Starting with the first teacher education course, STU teacher-educators infiltrate the coursework and educator preparation with the content knowledge, the self-confidence drills, and the testing skills to equip the teacher candidates for success. The teacher preparation program at STU has earned a commendable program ranking based on a 95% first time passing rate. To an outsider, there is not a problem. To insiders, the fear of failure haunts these Mexican American teacher candidates. (At this time, 2 of the 3 graduating seniors in this study on the first try passed their certification exams; but 1, an honor student, missed a passing score by 4 points and must continue to retake one of the required tests to be eligible for hire as a public school teacher. He is frightened.)

The participants in this study are highly aware that across the state and nation, Hispanic students fare much lower than White students on all standardized exams. Moreover, STU teacher candidates sense added tension and pressure, knowing that in Texas the teacher education programs are ranked—only—according to the yearly results of first time test takers' passing scores on the certification exams. All test results are listed and published according to students' race/ethnicity. Consequently, when only two to four Hispanics from STU take a certification test in a year, although their names are not announced, their test scores are obvious to people on campus and across the state. This means the accountability of teacher candidates at small HBCUs is easily identifiable. Such statistical data—numbers, not names—have the potential to betray or damage these teacher candidates of Color. The message heard is that "teachers who went

to program X are thought to be better than those who went to Program Y" (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 15).

Through personal experiences and textbook discussions, these Mexican American teacher candidates are cognizant of the effects of institutional and societal racism inherent in standardized testing (Luttrell, 2003). No exam is neutral or culture free. They also realize that not all testing disparities can be overcome by hard work (meritocracy), but they remain caught in the dynamics of vulnerability and ambiguity (Anzaldua, 1999).

Educating teacher candidates, who have experienced subordination, is not solely a pedagogical issue but a political-ideological issue as well (Bartolome & Balderrama, 2001). These stories and many more demonstrate that the Mexican American teacher candidates bring to STU and to the teaching profession their insights, conflicts, and tensions with supposedly neutral schooling practices and ideologies (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Luttrell, 2003). By using a CRT analytic framework, interrogations of these conflicts and tensions has aligned closely with two CRT goals: to work to improve schooling experiences and to overturn systemic stratifications (Giroux, 1992). As Ladson-Billings (2005) explained, the teaching and learning process must be elevated "so that people can see it as a part of institutional change" (p. 38).

Linking Critical Race Theory to Enduring, , Situated, and Endangered Lives

The promise of using CRT to examine the realities (and changes) in enduring, situated, and endangered selves is that it deepens understandings of the teacher candidates' experiences and, specifically, the oppressions (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Spindler & Hammond, 2000). Developing such deeper understandings of the forces of

oppression and acting in the pursuit of social justice are mutually reinforcing parts of the same process (Weber, 2001).

The CRT framework helps to reveal ways the institution imposes practices and polices that support, subjugate, or impede the teacher candidates' development. CRT challenges notions of diversity and social hierarchy. As Britzman (2003) so aptly explained,

> To assume a critical voice then, does not mean to destroy or devalue the struggles of others. Instead, a critical voice attempts the delicate and discursive work of rearticulating the tensions in practices or constraints, as it questions the consequences of the taken-for-granted knowledge shaping responses to everyday life and fashioning meanings from them. (p. 35)

By recognizing the intersections of race, class, gender, and power relations, we found these border crossers' identities in constant flux, dependent on the contexts in which they are situated (McKenna, 2003). Similar to other historically subordinated groups, the teacher candidates "exist in a kind of in-between world between the power and privilege of the social order and the oppression and degradation of their racial group" (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 8).

Their narratives reveal how they came to determine which racially troubling situations (power improprieties) to try to handle and which to ignore. In many cases, much discrimination was overlooked, if only because attending to subtle oppressions would not help them to attain their goals. Also, they modified subjugated feelings by finding the good people within the institutional community; they found peers and faculty who could be trusted. Such increased self-knowledge is important, because it can be accompanied by increased self-confidence. In both, capital is created when the behaviors

or relations among persons change in ways that facilitate action (Feagin & McKinney, 2004; Stake, 2006).

Their narratives also reveal how enduring qualities—like the values of family, education, and hard work—persist as these teacher candidates embrace new situations, even those of endangerment (e.g., poor health, lack of medical insurance, inferior transportation, or no child support). In turn, situations (the interactions, experiences, and processes of learning) within the STU community are shaping the teacher candidates' enduring selves. Learning shapes whom they are becoming, and their teaching is shaped by what they have learned (Britzman, 2003).

Lens of Borderlands Consciousness

Restatement of Theory and Connections

Latina critical scholarship or borderlands consciousness evolved as Mexican Americans rendered their bilingual and bicultural experiences as a resistive measure against ideological hegemony (Elenes, 2003). Borderlands consciousness evolved to serve as a humanizing pedagogy that values the students' background knowledge, culture, and life experiences and creates learning contexts where power is shared by students and teachers (Bartolome, 1996; Giroux, 1992). This theoretical perspective differs from CRT and critical pedagogy in that it is focuses more on the border or mestiza identity and notions of difference, voice, and agency (Bartolome & Balderrama, 2001; McKenna, 2003). This scholarly pursuit takes into account the interrelationships between identity and difference without essentializing (binding together the subjects as unified, inferior, or static) (Elenes, 2003; Nieto, 2003). A pedagogy of difference seeks not to

exoticize or demonize the Other but, rather, seeks to position difference to critically engage social interactions and cultural practices **(**Giampapa, 2004).

The concept of *agency* and *voice* is viewed somewhat differently, depending on the paradigm. The humanistic interpretation of agency and voice posits the subject as the originator and the determinant source of will and action. Within this viewpoint, there is little sense of what conditions make it impossible for some groups to take up, live, and speak particular discourses (Giroux, 1992). Rooted in the CRT perspective, human agency "accommodates, mediates, and resists dominating social practices and inspires struggle" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 253) "within a praxis of liberation" (p. 62). The poststuructualist scholar Britzman (2000) found agency and voice situated in and fashioned by social effects and social relations, and St. Pierre (2000) explained, "Agency occurs by refusing to reproduce the performance" (p. 277). In this CRT study, while closely aligned with the concept of voice, *agency* refers to one's will, the exertion of power, the act of mediation, or the driving force in taking action, which transpires from within an individual and one's social relations (McLaren, 1999). From agency, voice emerges, because "as human subjects, we are largely formed by language, and language is the medium for all praxis" (Stanley, as cited in Pinar et al., p. 313). "To speak of voice is to address the wider issue of how people either become agents…or function as subjects" (Giroux, 1992, p. 170).

Revealed in this study are the teacher candidates' overlapping existences within and beyond the academy that cause them to live in multiple spaces, crossing borders of difference and similarity (Ladson-Billings, 2005). An image of border crossers not only expresses relations of power and powerlessness, "but captures the potential for agency;

that is the possibility of moving from the margins (exclusion) to the center (inclusion) or the reconfiguration and establishment of other centers" (Giampapa, 2004, p. 193). Crossing borders can represent a loss of self, or it can open the way to new vision, understanding, and empowerment (Pugh et al., 2000). Whereas *border crossers* defines the uniqueness of these Mexican American teacher candidates who experience shifting and contradictory realities, *borderlands* defines the HBCU as a site of negotiations within spaces of separation and difference, comfort and familiarity. The border, borderlands, and border crossings are the shared and collective naming of present and future ways "of being in the world—of juggling culture and of embracing ambiguity, struggles, and solidarities" (Villenas & Foley, 2004, p. 201).

Teacher Candidates' Relationship With Borderland Consciousness

Asking the teacher candidates to acknowledge their identity as Hispanic, Mexican American, Latino/a, or Chicano/a aroused an awakening in all of us. These teacher candidates had strived to become a part of the university community and initially were caught off guard by my interest. For instance, when asked, "What does it mean to be a Mexican American teacher?" Joey responded, "I've not thought about it."

From the start, I was reminded how their ethnic identities are not inheritances; rather, they emerge from interactions among groups in sociopolitical and institutional contexts (Olneck, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). The identities of Mexican Americans are not solely grounded in their ethnicity and race, because there is no monolithic Hispanic culture. Ethnicity marks only one dimension in who these teacher candidates are and are becoming (Pizarro, 2005). With respect to who belongs and under what conditions,

ideological and sociopolitical processes both constrain and enable (re)negotiation of identity.

Intriguing was each candidate's choice of a name (pseudonym) for this study. Susan and Klarissa announced, "I don't want anything Mexican sounding." Joey chose the name of his favorite TV personality, and Destiny selected a term to personify her goal: "I *will* graduate." Theodore and Louis decided on names similar to their own, and Constance never explained the reason for her choice. Even though I was bothered by Klarissa and Susan's notion of not wanting a Mexican-sounding name, I did not question them to avoid possibly tainting their later comments. I hoped that through this study they would see that I value "things Mexican." Still, I worried that I was imposing my own political agenda by racializing their consciousness and spotlighting differences when they appeared to be either hesitant, naïve, or disinterested in such differences.

Mestiza consciousness. The impact of sometimes being considered the Others at STU, and in the dominant society, creates a divided consciousness—always looking at one's self through the lens of other people's ideologies. This powerful notion of double consciousness, as promoted by DuBois (1905/1994) (who borrowed it from Freud), describes the inner turmoil of watching one's self and of measuring one's self through the eyes and criteria of others (Britzman, 2003, p. 18). Similarly, Anzaldua (1999) designated mestiza consciousness to reveal the psychic restlessness within Latina/os that positions one's thoughts in the past (Mexico), present (United States), and territory between the homelands (borderlands). Valenzuela (1999) further politicized interpretations of a dual frame of reference—the notion of evaluating present circumstances through the lens of prior (less positive) experiences. Rather than position dual consciousness as tormenting,

Valenzuela (1999) stated that through additive schooling students have opportunities to become agents of change. In contrast to subtractive schooling, through additive activities students learn about their own cultural history and issues (Villenas & Foley, 2004). Additive schooling is specifically contrasted to subtractive schooling when race and ethnicity sharply shape subgroups, and those students marginalized as different are called upon to make sense of schooling when schooling is making no attempt to make sense of them. Valenzuela (1999) railed against this subtractive nature of schooling practices, which defines Chicano/as' cultural backgrounds as deficient or problematic and thus undermines the students' motivation to succeed.

As explained by Giroux (1992), this "discourse of difference has contributed to paralyzing forms of essentialism, ahistoricism, and a politics of separation" (p. 169). Such cause-and-effect positioning was heard in Destiny and Louis's stories of race and class subordination. By sharing their stories, my intent is to go beyond the telling, to analyze "how ideologies are actually taken up in the voices and lived experiences of students as they give meaning to the dreams, desires, and subject positions that they inhabit" (Giroux, p. 169). These stories illustrate how their lived experiences have constituted a divided consciousness that vacillates between who they were in the past, in the present, and may become in the future. Also revealed is the coming together of two incompatible frames of reference in which occurs *un choque*, a cultural collision of despair (Anzaldua, 1999). Such was true in the destruction of identities within U.S. schools when students and communities were given the message that success in school and in the wider society required that they abandon their language and affiliation with their culture (Cummins, 1996). Rather than a sense of affirmation or pride, Mexican and

Mexican American students confronted a sense of shame in regard to their language and cultural background (Ovando & McLaren, 2000).

It was the subtractive treatment—a politics of separation and oppression—that shadows Destiny's memories of schooling in her hometown. Such treatment impelled her, at that time, to internalize the dominant culture's view of Mexican American students as deficient and unworthy of opportunities to pursue a college education.

> You have to understand, Ms. D, there's a lot of difference between the way different students are treated…[this city] is very racist…It's like [White] teachers are not willing to share what they have…Only for the White kids.

Notable here is Destiny's sense of *lack of agency* rooted in an absence of teacher affirmation accorded to the Mexican American students in her hometown schools. It was the school's ideology and curriculum that communicated acceptable and unacceptable images of who college students were suppose to be. Teacher attitudes positioned Destiny to feel inferior. Without early teacher affirmation, Destiny did not repudiate internalization of ineligibility and did not allow herself to proceed to higher education until she was 32 years old.

It was these experiences (or lack thereof) that shaped Destiny's determination to teach children in inner-city schools. Destiny wants especially to teach those students who are viewed as deficient or problematic by their own parents or teachers. As is her nature, she closely watches to find and support those children ignored or subjugated by schooling practices. During our conversations and in her written reflections, Destiny specifically expressed concern for a first-grade boy, seemingly cast off by the teacher. His extreme solitude, refusal to talk, and unwillingness to participate caused the teacher to ignore him by placing his desk behind her back while she taught. Greatly bothered, Destiny chose to

sit beside the boy, striving to help him to interact in class activities and with the other children. Perhaps Destiny's protective actions and advocacy for this withdrawn child stem from her own early life experiences with deafness and feelings of difference and separation from the talking world. Candidates "bring to teacher education their educational biography. …Their history of learning can be unconsciously repeated, now transferred onto the position of teacher" (Britzman, 2003, p.15).

Here, the notion of agency is implicit in understanding that Destiny and Others do not have to remain passive subjects but have the potential to resist ideological colonization. Destiny and the other teacher candidates have realized that critical actions of resistance and social reconstructions are dependent on the power of agency generated through access to prerequisite tools such as literacy (Egbo, 2004). In Destiny's case, just as Friere (1968) advocated, literacy can be simultaneously practical and consciousness raising, leading her (and us) to challenge and change oppressive social structures.

While waiting for our small group session, Louis and I chatted, but he became distracted. He stopped the conversation, apologizing as he looked across the terrain at two men crouched beneath the shrubbery. "I'm sorry. See those men over there. It's just so—hard, 'cause I know how they feel. They're just trying to work, to get money for to get money for their families." Shaking his head, Louis felt torn, angry, divided between the experiences of his own past and present and the ongoing oppression against undocumented workers.

> I'm sorry, I don't care what people say, I'm Hispanic. I know where my grandparents came from. I know how hard they had to work…I've talked to people that made their way across. They had no water, no food. It's reality. Some people had to eat dogfood, grass! I've dealt with *illegals*. I've picked watermelons, cantaloupes, cucumbers, tomatoes with them. They just want to work. They stay quiet! Huhhhh! (shakes head in despair). Often they're ignored.

At that moment I noted hearing Louis, for the first time, refer to himself as Hispanic, as if to elevate the status of Mexican Americans in my eyes. Today his life is different; he no longer works in the fields alongside the migrant workers. Yet, during our conversation, Louis revealed a duality, a consciousness of his present life and a consciousness about the crouching immigrant men's struggles. He understands the oppressions most likely endured by the two migrants waiting to move on. Louis lives a profound understanding of the struggles the students, their families, and the community endure. Is not this sense of social justice what we want to nourish in future teachers?

Beyond these concerns, Louis expressed frustration at STU classmates who seem callous to immigrant issues.

> Those illegals, I see them in the store…In my classes the Others say ridiculous things about illegals. I get so mad. But I keep quiet. [Pauses, shakes head in anger and disbelief.] They wouldn't understand. They talk about slavery and civil rights but they don't see we've had struggles too. We've worked like slaves.

As both a grandson of Mexican immigrants and a college student, Louis felt commonality and difference with the men. His "recognition that wholeness and commonality are acts of will" was not a passive acknowledgement (Giroux, 1992, p. 169). Furthermore, he felt remorse over his STU classmates' insensitivities and ignorance. Such remorse causes distance and division. Consequently, a divided self represents a repressed self (Pinar, et al., 2000). Here, DuBois' (1905/1994) concept of psychic duality—double consciousness— calls for "the importance of an academic safe haven for a divided self to engage in healing, understanding, and to advance" (p. 350).

Spotlight on agency. Agency is a key element within a politics of self-identification, self-definition, and self-actualization. With agency derived from a dual

identity consciousness, Joey and Susan positioned themselves to negotiate additive aspects of schooling (Valenzuela, 1999). By seeking to be a role model for young students, Joey makes the effort "to hopefully change a few lives" through his student teaching.

> I'm about the only (Mexican American) man they've ever seen getting a college education. They'll speak Spanish, but I answer them in English. Or the other way, if they use English, I answer in Spanish.

Joey wants students to understand that speaking two languages generates variant perspectives and is an advantage that will serve them well in life. By code-switching, Joey demonstrates that he belongs "to both worlds and will not be forced to give up one for the other" (Villenas & Foley, 2004, p. 209). For Joey code-switching is a particular way to understand differences, using language within its contexts of culture and power. Joey strategically code-switches for both academic and social purposes (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002).

Joey is conscious of how young students' feelings assume different roles and takes a principled stand on behalf of those students perceived as different (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Rather than directly reprimand students' subjugations, Joey prefers to energize potentials for students learning together and from one another.

> I have a story that happened last week…I divided the group into soccer and basketball. I'm watching them pick their own teams when I hear one kid say, "Us wetbacks love soccer." …I hear a White kid say, "Well, I'm a whiteback who's gonna play soccer." Then I run over there, "Well, I'm one of y'all. Here I am!" I tell them, "Except for American Indians, one time or the other, all of our families crossed the water!" They laughed.

Joey's "recognition that wholeness and commonality are acts of will and creativity" was not a passive acknowledgement (Giroux, 1992, p. 169). Perhaps out of context his story is open to strong disagreement. However, in the teaching context where Joey's supervisors

and Joey's students trust him, his commitment to his students and to high standards causes Joey to be a highly effective physical education teacher. As is his nature, Joey's creative agency (Giroux, 1992; Luttrell, 2003) conveys a positive approach to preventing problems and redirecting behaviors. Joey especially enjoys incorporating play as a source of agency (Luttrell, 2003). He believes that teaching with a positive spirit, and humor when appropriate, helps students to resolve anger without retaliation. Joey is fully aware that many of his students' families were outcasts as immigrants in the past and remain marginalized in the present, but he believes their future can be different. Like Joey, teachers and schools can become agents in reversing social inequality by shifting from coercive relations of power to collaborative relations of power (Cummins, 1996).

The complex nature of human agency is often juxtaposed against the call for *group solidarity* (assimilation) (Pinar et al., 2000). If a student challenges the discourse of group membership, he or she may be viewed as rebellious. If he or she fully assimilates into the system, the person appears to have sold out and is not capable of influencing change (Ladson-Billings, 2005). At STU and within the dominant society, daily these Mexican American teacher candidates are their own agents in negotiating multicultural spaces, the overlapping borders of class and race.

Akin to the other candidates' stories, in Susan's narratives can be found constructs of difference, resistance and agency. Such self-representation as "different" supports identity with a critical edge rather than one as a powerless, devalued marginality. As conveyed in her remarks, Susan included or excluded herself according to how she assessed the context and perceived social relations.

> [At STU] I can pretty much walk in every room and I feel comfortable…When someone makes me feel uncomfortable, I react ….I mean being 40 makes me

> different! I've tried to get along here. I've even gone to the church services here. In my health and wellness class, the guys were really surprised that I could bench press.

At least once I observed Susan mediate self-imposed subjugation. When Susan was asked to serve as president of the Educators Club, she declined, explaining to our membership, "An African American student should be president." Her peers argued with this decision because they believed she possessed the interest and leadership skills to be an effective officer. As was Susan's nature, she did not want to see herself in a role that she felt subtracted from the university's uniqueness, but she also wanted to show regard for her African American classmates. Susan, at that moment, had defined an *ideological space of Others*, using voice to position herself. On the other hand, Susan often expressed objections or assumed a behind the scenes role in defense of any disparaged student. Several times I witnessed her waiting after class to offer assistance to students in need. There is no doubt connections are being drawn between Susan's agency as a STU student and her future actions as a teacher in the public schools. There is no doubt Susan will become an advocate for her own students.

Susan's is but one story of border crossers. All of the teacher candidates' stories reveal a sense for survival and a strength that comes from their borderland experiences, which will certainly assist them later as educators (Anzaldua, 1999; Delgado-Bernal, 1999). Such narratives of Mexican American teacher candidates can be, and should be, understood in terms of discomfort, excitement, contradictions, conflict, solidarities, and struggles (McKenna, 2003).

Within these stories are revealed "the cutting perceptiveness of these students and the multiple levels at which they critiqued" societal practices (Pizarro, 1998, p. 59). The

contradictions existing between the mainstream university culture and the experiences of these Mexican American teacher candidates continue to shape how they make meaning of their university lives and futures as professionals (Darder et al., 2003; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). While at STU the Mexican American teacher candidates are strengthening networks among their social locations and their political positions in order to assume, live, and speak particular discourses.

Language consciousness and language issues. Not only does language carry culture but also it is the key tool for the development of consciousness and voice. Language develops out of a sense of difference—if I am not this, then I must be that (Anzaldua, 2002). Our language embodies particular kinds of values that constitute a sense of the political, ethical, economic, and social. "Language in all of its complexity becomes central not only in the production of meaning and social identities but also as a constitutive condition for human agency" (Giroux, 1992, p. 19). One comes to know one's self, experiences, and interpretations of the world through language. Since consciousness is shaped through language, language can serve as a means of control as well as a means of liberation (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004).

Much has been written about the significance of language. Language serves not only as a marker for national or ethnic identities (Lopez, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999) but also as a problem, a right, a disability, or a resource (Ovando & McLaren, 2000). In some settings languages function as a form of symbolic capital or as a means of social control, and yet in others, these multiple roles may be interconnected (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). At STU not all Latino/a teacher candidates are bilingual, and a few of them resent assumptions that they are fluent Spanish speakers. Yet, all 7 teacher candidates expressed

concern that their Spanish might not be good enough to effectively teach the children in Texas public schools.

As "victims" of an educational system in Texas where Spanish has not been highly regarded, the 3 oldest study participants—Theodore, Susan, and Destiny—have not fully supported their own children's second language development. They instead depended on the grandparents to foster speaking Spanish with their children. Destiny explained, "I know I need to teach my son Spanish, but I just don't have time like my mother did." Yet, Destiny remains vigilant in not allowing her son to belittle or think less of the children who are Spanish-dominant speakers at his elementary school. Destiny, like the other study participants, wants her son and other children to understand the value of dual language skills.

Among the 7 teacher candidates, the matter of speaking Spanish ranged from frustration to liberation. The participants who are less fluent in Spanish specifically expressed anxiety about their surnames, which typically causes people to mistakenly assume they speak fluent Spanish. As Constance explained, "Especially at work, people hand me the phone, expecting me to speak Spanish. …I'm always getting made fun of, like [laughs], 'Why doesn't this little Mexican girl learn Spanish?'"

Constance's remarks reflect the double bind in which many Latino/a students find themselves. Inside schools they have been required to speak English, but outside of schools, some of them speak a version of Spanish that is not of the "high variety" (Valdes, 1996). Inside schools many have experienced pervasive language suppression as well as cultural exclusion from school curricula (Valencia, 2004). They live within a dominant culture that promotes the value of English over other languages, but because of

their Spanish surnames, they are expected to be bilingual. They express feelings of ambivalence or guilt about a lack of fluency in "high" Spanish. Quick to see the irony, Joey explained, "I speak good Spanish in Texas but bad Spanish in Mexico."

While Joey and Louis comfortably negotiate two languages, the others are apprehensive that their Spanish is "not good enough for the classroom" (marking a distinction between conversational and academic aspects of language proficiency). Such "distinction," as Cummins (1996) explained,

> refers to the extent to which the meaning being communicated is supported by contextual or interpersonal cues (the gestures, facial expressions, and intonation present in face-to face interactions) or dependent on linguistic cues that are largely independent of the immediate communicative context. (p. 56)

In effect, Constance considers herself underprepared.

> I've taken 5 years of Spanish. I can make a broken sentence [laughs]. But if you don't practice, you lose it. I take trips to Mexico often and whenever I go, my Spanish seems to improve.

Her frustrations echo Cummins's (2000) premise that "superficial conversational fluency is not a good indicator of long-term academic growth in English" (p. 132). While possessing a high-status language is perceived positively, the same does not hold true for the primary language spoken by these members of a historically subordinate group.

In principle, students' identity-language should be incorporated into the instructional program, to challenge the devaluation of the community in the wider society and to contribute to students' academic engagement (Cummins, 2000). Just as elsewhere in Texas and the United States, at STU the Mexican American students continue to experience a long history of underrepresentation in higher education. Also, at STU neither speakers of Spanish nor Spanish-language programs are given high regard. For

example, the limited sponsorship of Latino/a cultural programming is initiated and self-funded by only two STU faculty members.

With few exceptions among the Latino/as on STU's campus, English is the language of primary interactions. I assume, rather than the intent to exclude through language differences, the teacher candidates' sparse exchanges in Spanish mark their efforts to acknowledge familiarity and in-group membership. In the case of these 7 teacher candidates, I never witnessed them using Spanish as a tool of exclusion. The teacher candidates, however, feel insulted by comments like, "You speak such good English." Perhaps persons making such comments do not consider them offensive, but references about the "good Mexican" reveal a colonizer attitude of power (Villalpando, 2003).

Most solutions offered to support Latino students in U.S. schools and universities have failed to acknowledge that the major problem is not that they speak Spanish (many do not), but that their identities as Latinos have long been "dismissed as resources in the development of their literacy" (Nieto, 2001, p. ix). Today, Susan does not speak fluent Spanish and well remembers how she was discouraged from learning the language and how her family did not feel welcomed at her school. She said, "Our parents did not want us to learn Spanish. They could not look at an instructor in her eye…I don't recall my parents visiting the school. They didn't go on field trips."

Different from the other study participants, after experiencing rejection of his cultural identity and language for much of his 50-plus years of life, Theodore has assumed the dominant society's perspective.

> Many years ago, I did not understand why we were not allowed to speak Spanish at my elementary school. I did not realize that I was being rude, until I was

> surrounded by a group from another foreign country, speaking a language that I did not understand. The proper place to speak Spanish is around people who all understand the language.

Such language issues continue to dominate the debates surrounding the education of today's ethnically diverse students. These debates encompass the study of the relationship between teacher behaviors and second-language acquisition (Valdes, 1996). Many of today's teachers are ill prepared to meet the unique academic needs of dual-language learners (Cummins, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). Even with mounting research on the intellectual and long term benefits of bilingualism, there are constant attacks on bilingual and ESL programs. Numerous attempts have failed to transform the image of language-minority students from being limited in English to being linguistically gifted students. The power of languages is multiplied by the number of languages that a person speaks (Calderon & Carreon, 2000).

Findings from this research study match Kinginger's (2004) explanations that dispositions toward learning language are indeed highly variable and loosely related to both real and imagined *belonging* within communities of practice. Although patterns of Spanish language maintenance differ among generations, the continuity and maintenance of the Spanish language influences Latino adaptability in the United States (Hidalgo, 1999). According to Olneck (2004),

> Ethnic identities are not inheritances or preservations; rather, they are ongoing active constructions that emerge out of interactions among groups within sociopolitical and institutional contexts. Within American schools…youth become ethnic as they develop images of themselves and of their place on the "map" of Americansociety. (p. 391)

Among these study participants, generational and age differences were noted. Whereas the youngest, Constance, perceives herself outside rather than directly inside the

Hispanic community, Theodore, Susan, Klarissa, Joey, and Louis see themselves as frequent border crossers transitioning their language communities. Although not ashamed of their ethnicity or their abilities to converse in Spanish, they played down their ethnic heritage in their efforts to assimilate into academic and curricular activities at STU.

These 7 teacher candidates consciously have worked not to set themselves apart in their efforts to assimilate into the educational environment. At STU, the 7 teacher candidates have negotiated their ethnic identity as Mexican Americans, but when their choice was narrowed to Black or White, they chose White. Here the construct of borderlands consciousness counters the idea of fixed essential identities. Additionally, through the lens of borderlands consciousness, evidence convinces me that these teacher candidates are not only acquiring variant perspectives, but also are contributing to the integrity of educational settings. Rather than a demarcated line that separates cultures, these teacher candidates are reaping the cons and pros of overlapping discourse communities. For them, the Black College serves as a transitory space—a sociopolitical border that offers some positioning of Otherness but safety and enrichment as well (Pugh et al., 2000).

Increasing participant self-knowledge. To work against the internalization of injustices and negative imagery, Feagin and McKinney (2003) advocated the first step is for students to increase self-knowledge, which also "may be accompanied by increased self-confidence" (p. 132). Whereas the participants in this study were eager to deliberate issues, they also sensed respect in finding that their thoughts and lives are valued. Destiny explained, "I'm glad someone is trying to understand what goes on in my life."

This study also increased the participants' sociopolitical consciousness. After the member-check experience in which she critiqued her first transcribed interview, Destiny recounted, "I read everything you wrote. It was all true. I cried. Seeing it on paper was something else. Lately, I had not stopped to really think about it." On the back page of the transcription, Destiny wrote in large manuscript letters the following excerpt:

> Please, if there is anything I want people to take from this interview it is that the "will" in many people is strong but life brings the changes in weather and sometimes its hard to put both feet on the ground. So we are running like hamsters in a cage…Running but getting nowhere or at least that's how we feel. It doesn't mean we want to stop.

With each teacher candidate I asked, "Has your participation in this research changed your perceptions of yourself or your perceptions of STU in any way? If so, what?" Their responses suggest they find only limited fault with STU polices and practices. Yet, disquieting were discussions bringing to the forefront the harsh realities of their lives. The interview questions evoked reactions and new perspectives, such as in Susan's response: "Some of the questions…How Hispanics felt and lived. How Hispanics may be the 'outsider,' I never thought about it that way. There were things I hadn't noticed."

For Joey, the interview process incited thoughts the high costs of a college education that block access for many of the students he now teaches.

> This [interview] is kind of hard because of how expensive it is to pay back…If I hadn't taken out a loan, I wouldn't finish. The coach told me I had to tell myself that I am worth the investment. I just wish it [college] didn't cost as much. There's so many kids out there that get discouraged when they hear how expensive it is.

Intrigued by the interview process, Joey asked permission for his girlfriend, a public school bilingual teacher, to accompany him as a silent observer to our second

interview. In his typically humorous style, Joey explained, "I want her to see that I can talk intelligently." True to their promise, the girlfriend did not interact during the taping of the second interview, but afterwards she had her own questions and comments. Both Joey and his girlfriend discussed how her parents, both teachers, were once considered middle class. Today, their insufficient teacher salaries have forced them, like many other teachers, to assume second jobs. The apparent change in society's status of teachers from middle class to working class gravely concerns this young couple. At the same time, according to Sharp (2004),

> To be viewed as a contributing member of society and to sense the possibility of achieving one's goals are powerful explanations for what keeps many of these [students] from being overcome by their life experiences and responsibilities and what helps them fit into the college environment and persist in earning their degree. (p. 127)

When asked, "What does it mean to be a Mexican American teacher?" Constance responded, "I know that I can help students learn. I want to raise the bar for them."

Linking Borderlands Consciousness to Enduring, Situated, and Endangered Lives

"The story of learning to teach begins actually much earlier than the time one first decides to become a teacher" (Britzman, 2003, p. 26). After all, teachers were once students and once children. Part of the work of the family and of teachers is to create "conditions for the students to learn traditions and history that are not of their own making but that they are expected to continue" (p. 9). Such conditions were recounted by Theodore, who admitted, "[At STU] my experiences have been difficult at times, like presenting content such as slavery. I did not know how my peers would receive the study. I have learned to present both the positive and negative side of a narrative." Theodore

also described a painful encounter during student teaching with one boy who asked him if he had ever been to Mexico.

> What he really wanted to know is if I knew some of his family, friends. He was here illegally and his parents told him that it was not possible for him to go back. He had tears in his eyes. I told him, "Your parents are right. Listen to them." But he kept asking me, "Do you know these people, this person?" He was very lonely. It was sad.

In bridging from enduring selves to situated selves, the preservice teachers revealed accounts of changing relationships to one another; to knowledge; and to power, agency, and voice. Most vocal was Susan about intersections of cultural, social class, and generational confrontations, especially with regard to a woman's place in society and to whether Mexican American children should first learn Spanish or English. From Susan's own experiences, she acknowledged,

> Those who are first generation, they are the ones who look down…They want Spanish as the first language. They are not happy when they see somebody who is educated, especially a woman. They look down on it, but that's the culture. We are not supposed to be in a position that a man is suppose to be in. I see a lot of that with older Hispanics. Everywhere you go now, you see signs, Are you bilingual? We will pay you to be bilingual.

One startling realization in learning to teach, for these candidates, is how the overwhelming complexity of a teacher's work "and taking up of an identity means suppressing aspects of the self" (Britzman, 2003, p. 27). Indeed, Louis suppressed aspects about himself, remaining silent when the Others at STU did not understand the plight and contributions of migrant workers. It is such inner turmoil that constructs the student/teacher as a site of contradictory realities, which Britzman (2003) described as "the tensions of experiences lost and found that touch the deepest recesses of the self" (p. 3). These student/teachers cannot easily resolve such conflicts that arise when they recognize and confront privileged knowledge based on relations of power in the silent

awareness that there are alternative ways of knowing and seeing. Through this pursuit for meaning, teacher candidates must come to terms with biography and education (Greene, 2003, pp. ix-x).

What is more, the Mexican American teacher candidates' narratives affirm what Britzman (year) termed the student teacher's double consciousness: those uncanny feelings, which arise from being caught between tradition and change, right and wrong, continuity and discontinuity. By extending this metaphor, we understand how mestiza or borderlands consciousness within the Mexican American teacher candidates traverses three dimensions, positioning one's thoughts in the past, the present, and the territory between (the borderlands) (Jones & Castellanos, 2003; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). For example, Louis views himself as a member of the collective culture of Hispanics, while also referencing the group's past and future. His description reveals a transition from enduring to situated self and also notes changes in demeanor and motivation essential in becoming a teacher. Here also Louis's situated self takes on enduring qualities:

> I have to learn to be as professional as I can be. It's going to be tough to get a job unless I act professional, talk professional. Where we Hispanics are at right now, we're evolving, we're getting degrees. The family is important for sticking together. Older Hispanics always told us school was important. But we need more motivation. The motivation is not there to get them to college. We have to help them.

Just as in the above quote, we find these 7 teacher candidates are situated in two cultural worlds and in between (as part student and part teacher). They embrace the dual struggle of educating others while being educated. This *struggle of dual consciousness* is not only the sense of being watched and of viewing the self through the eyes of others, but also "the wishes one makes for existence and learning" (Britzman, 2003, p. 18).

Most applicable to this study is Britzman's (2003) further assertion, "We must develop a double consciousness of persons and of places, relating those involved in the practice of teaching to the history, mythology, and discourses of the institutions framing their work" (p. 26). To pursue this requires an understanding not simply of the structure of the institution or the teaching skills acquired there, but also of the constructions of one's identity as a teacher. It is the complexity of relationships that works through pedagogy to shape the identity and practices of the student teacher. Such relationships shape each other in the process of coming to know who the student teacher was, is now, and can become.

The 7 teacher candidates came to STU seeking a smaller campus environment and stayed at STU, because they felt affirmed and believed they were acquiring important relationships that enhance their knowledge and skills to teach. In Klarissa's opinion, the strength of the institution is "the diversity. It's primarily African American but…there's a feeling of a community that helps a lot." Likewise, Theodore explained, "This is the community where I grew up and where I want to teach."

Lens of Critical Pedagogy

Restatement of Theory and Connections

In this chapter the analysis initially used CRT to focus on the participants' experiential knowledge while examining race relations, institutional racism, and power relations at STU. Next, by employing borderlands consciousness, analysis highlighted the participants' border and mestiza/o identities through difference, voice, and agency. Drawing on insights and momentum gleaned from the perspectives of CRT and

borderlands conciousness, I now employ critical pedagogy to further foreground the 7 preservice teachers' experiences at STU.

> Critical pedagogy provides a lens through which educators are better able to examine and interact with the politics of education…the real underlying power relationships that structure our world: for example, how we make meaning of commonplace events…the type of preparation teachers receive, the way students are perceived and treated, the curriculum we use. (Leistyna et al., 1996, p. v.)

Specifically, the twofold purpose is to uncover tensions of culture and class in the development of community and to coconstruct counter normative knowledge about structures and systems as well as methodologies at STU (Freire, 1999; Giroux, 1992; Goldstein, 1997, 1998; Greene, 1996; McLaren, 2003; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal 2004; Valenzuela, 1999).

A distinction among scholars separates critical pedagogy's intent and artistry from teacher-directed instruction (Freire, 1999; Giroux, 1992; Pinar et al., 2000). This emphasis moves scholars' deliberations from "what education is" to "what education does" (Hyun, 2006, p. 136), from naming "the contradiction between what schools claim they do and what they actually do" (Giroux, 1992, p. 151). As opposed to technical instructional elements, pedagogy refers to the moral, ethical, and relational aspects. It is the pedagogical act of reflexivity (reconstruction of experiences) that adds to the meaning of the experiences, increases the learners' abilities to construct new knowledge, and directs the course of subsequent experiences. Pedagogy is a concomitant process of sociopolitical evolution that (a) leads to progress in the educational system for the people involved in it, and (b) allows the community to shape its own future (Giroux, 1992). Critical scholars articulate pedagogy in conjunction with relationship building and power sharing within the context of learning and teaching. As Freire (1999) argued, teachers

must become learners and learners become teachers through shared dialectical experiences to overturn old structures and invent new ones that are more democratic.

Coconstruction of Counter Normative Knowledge about Structures and Systems

From the literature comes understanding to interrogate systems and structures (history, organization, programs, and curricula) that serve to maintain asymmetrical relations and authoritarian practices (Lopez, 2004; Ovando & McLaren, 2000). When considering institutional practices and policies that perpetuate a group's subordination and oppression, layers of overlapping complexities deal with abilities, racism, phenotype, culture, sexism, language, generational status, and classism (Valdes, 1996). Helpful in comprehending the tentacles of race and racism—those invasive structural mechanisms fed by race and racism within an institution—is McLaren and Dantley's explanation:

> Race must be seen as a set of structured social practices which reproduce themselves through individuals who are imprisoned by historically conditioned regimes of discourse, by market-logic interests, and by the interests of dominant groups. Racism, therefore must be described as *structured* (through historically and ideologically loaded discourses, social practices, relations of production, gender and social class) and *as structuring* (through the individual's active, yet often contradictory, participation in these discourses, relations, and practices) while it *often is simultaneously destructured* (through both formal and discourses, relations and practices). (as cited in Pinar et al., 2000, p. 319, emphasis added)

Consequently, race or ethnicity must be portrayed as many interwoven dimensions that together form one's positionality in a shifting set of social relations. There is no monolithic Latino/a or African American identity. Intersectionality must be taken into account. For example, "language oppression by itself cannot account for racial oppression, nor can racial oppression alone account for class oppression" (Villalpando, 2005, p. 623).

As revealed earlier in the CRT-based analysis, 5 of the 7 participants in this study described discriminatory confrontations endured at STU's offices of the Registrar and Financial Aid. During the colleague-check process, one reader spoke in defense of the staff members at these offices: "Have you ever stood by the window and heard how our students treat them? It's no wonder their attitudes are defiant." For clarification I inquired whether she had specifically observed the Mexican American student participants' negotiations at the registrar's window. My colleague replied, "No, but I don't see that they act any differently than the other students." Beyond these sometimes recognized but mostly ignored improprieties at STU emerged two systemic and pedagogical concerns: (a) the desire for our institution to raise academic standards and (b) the absence of Hispanic knowledge and issues in curriculum and discussions at STU.

Both concerns strike at the question: How is it that a university that is committed to racial equality cannot recognize that established educational hegemony is oppressive? The heart of the matter is that most STU constituents cannot comprehend the problems because these problems help preserve a sense of entitlement. Most of us either are not capable of seeing, or are not trained to address, the hegemonic injustices in attitudes and curriculum so normalized in our lives.

Most vocal was Susan in her resentment that mediocrity at STU causes education to be less effective:

> It's the low expectations of the school from the administration to professors. It's in all of my classes…It's as if the professor does too much. They put false hope in some of the kids. The professor is playing with their time in life. If you know they're not going to be successful in a area, you have to tell them…I've learned no matter what their expectations, I follow my own…I go beyond the readings and assignments. It takes a lot of inner want—in anything, it will be hard.

Louis explained that not only the STU professors, but also the students are at blame for lowered standards that perpetuate negativity and a loss of education:

> Some students just expected them to hand us grades…their attitudes caused it not to be fun…Be tougher. Hold students accountable. Help them to see what they're doing is hurting themselves…Instead of raising standards, the students influence the teacher to change to easy stuff. Then the students aren't motivated and they just shut down.

Similarly, when asked, "How would you change or improve STU?" Constance responded, "I think that it's important to raise the standards with every subject, with everything that has to do with education." Constance was especially provoked about her Saturday morning class, where only "two or three of us were in by 9:00, and the others would drizzle in by 9:45. The professor got tired of it and changed the class to 10:00." Constance grew frustrated that the professor would not follow the published schedule, choosing to start and stop the class at a later time. "That takes more of my Saturdays away. I'm an on-time person. That's not fair."

In suggesting advice to share with future teacher candidates, Theodore noted the importance of choosing strong professors, "It's important to ask if the teachers will challenge you." From evidence in the teacher candidates' written philosophies of education and their autobiographies, I realize that these 7 teacher candidates came to STU with the expectation they would need to work hard to achieve. In choosing to attend a HBCU, they had anticipated an emphasis on Blackness and never balked at STU's requirement of at least one course in African American Studies. Even so, they have come to realize how little different groups know about each other and, specifically, that they are not well versed in their own cultural history (Cummins, 2000; Nieto, 2002). For example, Louis did not express resentment so much as regret that at STU the struggles of Browns

are not more closely aligned with the struggles of Blacks. Louis has found at STU there is a strong commitment to racial equality when the fight does not get in the way of the rights of Black people.

> On the day of the [immigrants' rights protest] march, most STU students didn't want to talk about it. They don't see things as being the same, similar. Yes, they talk about their ancestors being slaves and what they went through. We've gone through the same thing like schools for the Whites only. We had to work hard, but to this day, people don't understand. Others need to see a lot of Hispanics have to do housework—it's the only job they can get. People need to open up to see the big picture. A lot of times I hear stories about slavery this and that. I'm sitting there thinking, y'all aren't the only ones. But I don't say anything.

It is important to reiterate that the 7 study participants did not express opposition to Black Studies. Rather they are rejecting a system of schooling that consistently shortchanges their own culture and the opportunities for a more expansive education (Lopez, 2004; Nieto, 2001; Pizarro, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999). In effect, as Leistyna and Woodrum (1996) put it,

> The efforts to enforce a common culture (an un-negotiated foundation of values, ethics, meaning, histories) are in fact the imposition of a homogenizing social paradigm (known as hegemony) that severely limits the possibility for a critical multicultural democracy. (p. 3)

Through this study we began to question: How are some topics promoted and others marginalized? Whose interests are advanced and silenced? Only Theodore, a History major, believes he has received an adequate foundation to later teach about diverse populations through his exposure in advanced, specialized courses. What becomes revolutionary is the transition of these teachers from the conceptual stage to implementation in teaching practices, the process where teachers begin to place youth's experiences and cultures at the center of instruction. To achieve this goal, one first must

examine if or how the university models, accommodates, and supports diversity among STU students.

From this study it appears *diversity* at STU primarily means race, racism, and civil rights as such issues pertain to African Americans. After all, the HBCUs were initiated to be responsive to the long traditions and perils of Blacks in the history of Africa as well as America. "Schools are reflective of the societies that develop them" (Asante, 1991, p. 170). It is as if STU has taken the first step in helping students to relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives but has not continued to advance the integrity of multicultural education. The premise of multicultural education asserts that a student is placed in a stronger position to learn if he or she is centered—that is, if the person "sees himself or herself within the context of the curriculum rather than at its margins" (Asante, p. 174). As explained by Leistyna and Woodrum (1996), the idea is not for teachers to silence students or place them on trial: "Instead, the process is to be unsettling only to the degree that it forces all of those involved to recognize their role in accepting and perpetuating oppression of any kind" (p. 5).

What increases controversy within this multicultural movement is the public's and government's call for accountability based on Eurocentric curriculum and testing practices, even though White people "are also victims of monoculturally diseased curricula" (Asante, 1991, p. 174). Unfortunately, most of STU's teaching force and administrators are victims of the same Eurocentric system. Unfortunately, some staff and faculty project the views of the general populace from other contexts, that Mexican American students are considered neither an educational or economic advantage but rather an expendable population. For too long, the cultural conditions and issues of

Latino/as have been invisible, omitted at STU. In effect, the Black College perpetuates *mis-education*: Established by Carter B. Woodson in 1933, the concept of mis-education implies that some students are educated away from their own culture and traditions (Asante, 1991). To change such wrongs, we must work to decrease dichotomies between groups while acknowledging our lack of information about other groups' cultural histories. We must not position ourselves to take a side but rather present issues through multiple perspectives. As Ladson-Billings (2003) urged, "We must build bridges between Black and Browns, making the connections."

To reemphasize a point earlier illuminated through the CRT-based analysis, particularly Constance and Louis resented STU professors who have not taken the time to educate themselves and consequently patronizingly call on them to explain "Mexican things." Just as proven by Valenzuela (1999), at STU some practices and ideologies are *subtractive for all students*. At STU subtractive education emerges via lowered academic standards and nonintegration of Latina/o issues in the curriculum. Subtractive schooling is a reversible process, but it is insufficient to simply concede that standards of excellence need to be enforced and to state that cultural groups' histories share similarities. Such limited concession distracts from acknowledgment of issues of power and control. Power is part of the equation. The gatekeepers—those in power at STU—make determinations about what is appropriate for curriculum and traditions and how such practices are enforced. Thus, in order to move forward, STU educational leaders must question who has a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. We must embrace the reality that for STU university to survive (morally, educationally, and economically) no population group is expendable. We must continue to honor Blackness, all the while challenging

hegemonic structures that justify ongoing oppressive practices against the Others. At STU, caring must be articulated through academic standards of excellence as well as through recognition of the lack of sensitivity toward Mexican culture, things Latina/o, and multiple Other cultures and ethnicities. It is unrealistic to expect all faculty to master the intricacies of multiple cultures. Thoughtful teachers, nonetheless, can abandon simplistic or narrow thinking as they guide and affirm their students. Such notions of affirmation will neither position students defensively nor disregard multilayered and contradictory ideologies (Lopez, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999).

Tensions of Culture and Language in the Development of Community

What matters in teacher education is the assurance that a wide range of perspectives are included in the conversations (Ladson-Billings, 2005) and that teacher educators help preservice teachers develop appropriate responses to variations in language and dialect diversity (Godley, Sweetland, Wheeler, Minnici, & Carpenter, 2006). Among preservice teachers at STU, a variety of perspectives converge with no consensus about how to support speakers of Spanish, Spanglish, and Ebonics in the classrooms. While a dialect is a variety of language associated with a particular regional or social group, it is not a lesser or ungrammatical way of speaking (Cullen, 2000; Godley et al.). The term *Standard English* refers to the dialects of English influenced by regional and discipline difference and valued in school, business, government, and the media. It is the dialect "used by those most powerful and affluent" in our society (Godley et al., p. 30).

Spanglish is an interesting cultural, linguistic phenomenon; it is a dialect sometimes termed *Tex-Mex*. *Ebonics* (from *ebony phonics*) is a relatively recent term,

which also is called Black vernacular English. While Spanish and English are designated languages, "if you think of a border between a language and a dialect as a broad gray area, not a distinct line," Ebonics and Spanglish reside in that transitional gray area (Cullen, 2000, p. 265). Both Ebonics and Spanglish are language systems that have a distinctive vocabulary and rules of pronunciation and grammar. Too often, these dialects are stigmatized by societal attitudes and devalued in schools. Both have linguistic dimensions that create a social and cultural distance. Also, the failure to recognize the value of these vernacular dialects is harmful to the academic success of students who speak these dialects. The failure to realize the critical role of teacher education in addressing more appropriate responses to dialect diversity thus contributes to teachers' miseducation (Godley et al., 2006).

To illuminate how language differences distinguish or divide one people from another, James Baldwin wrote,

> Language is also a political instrument, means, and proof of power. It is the most vivid and crucial key to identity: it reveals the private identity, and connects one with, or divorces one from the larger public, or communal identity. (as cited in Cullen, 2000, p. 287)

Beyond an understanding of languages and dialects, for these 7 teacher candidates (and others at STU) their assimilation into the academy (the culture of higher education in the U.S.) is very much like learning a new dialect (Cullen, 2000). Some, but not all, of the study participants mentioned an "underpreparedness" in using new vocabulary and new methods for writing the compositions and the more technical lesson plans, specific to the discipline of teacher education.

Never without a dictionary, Destiny constantly seeks definitions for unfamiliar words like *anecdotal record* and *aesthetics*—vocabulary found in questions on the

certification test study guides. She insists that her own son practice word games with her to help him prepare him for his standardized tests in fourth grade. Trying to inspire his special education students, Louis always focused on building their vocabulary. He also uses "big words" at home with his two teenage brothers.

> They'll ask, "Why do you talk like that?" I say, "Well, how do you expect me to get a job as a teacher? If your teacher was to talk to you like the way you talk, you wouldn't respect him." …I know it's going to be tough to get a job unless I talk professional.

As the study evolved, language and languages assumed a prominent role in the participants' conversations. Since language and languages are one component of identity, it became important to investigate the teacher candidates' experiences with dialect diversity and the role that teacher education plays within these experiences.

Spanish and English. Of concern was the teacher candidates' alarm over tensions between Spanish-dominant speakers and dual language learners in the public school classrooms where they intern or student teach. According to Joey, "It's like they get mad. …'I've learned English, why don't you get busy and learn it?'" Constance concurred, "I've seen that frustration…Some of the kids come out with, 'Why can't you just speak right? Why do you talk like that?'" Having read *Subtractive Schooling* by Valenzuela (1999), the teacher candidates were confronting similar realities of tensions and inadequate instruction in their assignments. Such experiences confirmed Valenzuela's findings that generally, first-generation immigrant students act more compliant and work harder than students from second- or third-generation immigrant families. Constance explained, "They were the most well behaved children, probably because they didn't know what was going on half the time." Theodore explained that the Spanish-dominant speakers "seem to grasp the opportunity to learn more. ...They seem more devoted where

the others may be slacking off. They don't make trouble." Since most teachers in the public schools are not fluent in Spanish, often these 7 Mexican American teacher candidates are called upon to negotiate altercations among Latino/a students. Later, Theodore wanted to discuss problems witnessed at a local high school's international program established for students from Mexico, Central America, and South America. "Neighborhood kids resented the monies set aside for the program, resented the resources going to this special program and not them." Even though Theodore understands the challenges, he believes the state's standardized "tests shouldn't be offered in Spanish. These students need to test in English…making the change wouldn't help. …It would cause more division, more separation."

Typically, the student-teaching semester (12 intense weeks in a real classroom) provides a teacher candidate with the assurance that he or she is prepared to pursue employment. In Theodore's case, rather than a decrease in apprehension during student teaching, his alarm increased. He grew dismayed by the lack of patience and anger expressed by bilingual students as he retaught his lessons in Spanish. It was not the English-only students but the dual language learners who opposed the need for teaching the lessons twice, first in English and then in Spanish. Especially challenging was his last class period each day. Among the 29 adolescents in this particular social studies class, 12 were Spanish-only speakers, about 12 spoke both Spanish and English, and 5 were English-only speakers.

Weekly, at the end of a student teaching day, Theodore and I met to strategize. We already knew that delivering a lesson first in English followed by instruction in Spanish fosters the view that English is the language of status and power. So, Theodore

tried alternating days in which he taught first in Spanish then in English, but we could see no observable decrease in tensions among his students. He deliberately crafted lessons based on culturally relevant content. For example, he introduced maps with the historical migration patterns of Mexicans into lands later claimed by Texans. He facilitated discussions about the presidential elections in Mexico, focusing on how the elections affected Texans and the greater United States. He tried not only cooperative group activities, but also different seating arrangements to encourage more camaraderie among the students. As he explained in our small group session, "I've learned, don't segregate them…disperse them throughout the class rather than sitting them to one side of the classroom." As much as possible, by standing at the classroom door to individually greet them and take interest in their daily lives, and by responding to comments in their journal writings, Theodore tried to treat the students as individuals in order to further model respect and humanizing pedagogy. His actions appeared worthy. Yet, the bilingual students continued directing resentment toward the Spanish-only speakers, retorting, "You're stupid! Learn English!"

Theodore's dilemma is representative of the societal problem and sociopolitical tensions enveloping bilingualism, limited English speakers, and the 31 million foreign-born people living in the United States. Over the past 20 years, our nation's limited English-proficient (LEP) population has ballooned from 6% to 12% in 2000. This means, as poignantly described by Nissman (2004), that first- and second-generation children of immigrants learn the English language in school and from their peers and media, but simultaneously they must act as the interpreters, the translators, for their parents and families.

> 25 million adults depend on their kids to help them understand everything from school permission slips, telemarketers' pitches and food labels to bills, job applications and doctors' prescriptions …From the moment they land in the United States, many immigrant parents and children reverse roles…translating information that can affect the well-being of their families—can be a huge responsibility…it can be not only embarrassing, but very frustrating to help them. (Nissman, 2004, pp. 1–2)

Furthermore, young interpreters can wield a great deal of control within their families and communities, undermining their parents' discipline and teachers' discipline. Often the young interpreters get angry and impatient. They start to resent the time it takes to interpret for their fellow students or for their parents' negotiations with a landlord, doctor, attorney, or grocery store clerk, while possibly missing out on school or social activities. While some accept their role, "many kids can't resist taking advantage of their linguistic prowess" (Nissman, 2004, p. 2). To"turn the tide the schools must help these young students see not only the value of adults (parents and teachers) as well as the value of speaking two languages as a life skill and in finding good careers (Nissman).

Realizing that I was not helping Theodore to alleviate the tensions, I asked Susan to help us better understand this perilous situation. Without hesitation Susan responded,

> I know the problem. I see it all the time. English-only students don't understand Spanish, so they can *ignore* the Spanish. They don't mind it. It gives them 10 minutes to "zone out" and think about other things. But for those students who know both Spanish and English, it's repetitive, B-O-R-I-N-G! There's no way they can totally ignore the lesson in Spanish. Besides, the teacher expects them to help out. There's no good solution.

Susan's response seemed logical but defeating. She further had opened my eyes to the crux of the problem, but I felt at loss, not being able to help Theodore fix the problem. We had come to understood better how the anger expressed by his bilingual students partially stems from their having so little solace away from the demands of English and Spanish at home, in the community, and at school. We had tried to alleviate the tensions

in the classrooms, but we found no solution. At stake, Delpit (2003) explained, is "the need to reeducate our nation to the truth about language. ...There is no quick fix" (p. 101). "Our American society suffers from a lack of bilingualism rather than an excess" (Cummins, 1996, p. 221). Our need is to view and explore language diversity as a resource rather than suppress or ignore it.

Also at stake is the need for the STU Teacher Education Program to further afford all preservice teachers specific pedagogy in the philosophies, methods, and resources that effectively support bilingual education and limited-English learners. The student population of Texas is 30% Mexican American and Hispanic (Guiterrez, 2004), but the STU teacher education program offers no designated course, or even a substantial portion of coursework, dedicated to identifying and supporting the needs of second-language learners. Why is this? Does it have to do with a narrow Afrocentric perspective or Eurocentric perspective perpetuated at the institution? Undoubtedly, such voids in curriculum perpetuate findings similar to Bartolome and Balderrama's (2001) assertions:

> Prospective teachers tend to uncritically and, often unconsciously, hold beliefs and attitudes about the existing social order that reflect the dominant ideology. Unfortunately, this reproduction of thinking often translates into teachers' uncritical acceptance of assimilationist and deficit-based views of Latino-students. (pp. 51–52)

Delpit (2003) questioned,

> Why, when language is the major medium of instruction, do we in schools of education give so little time, effort, and attention to teaching our pre-service teachers about the basic assumptions and the realities of language diversity? ...If we show minimal respect for others' languages, it becomes too easy, to then disrespect the person. (p. 212)

Delpit (2003) asserted that it is the ignorance of educators about the role of institutional power in deciding whose language is standard that makes students feel inferior about

their home language when they are in school. In turn, it is difficult to believe that constituents at STU can honor a subordinated ethnic group if all ideology and curriculum are channeled through a dominant English language and pedagogy that often devalues the very differences of the cultural group it serves (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004). Primarily, the content for teacher education preparation is determined by the state certification test competencies rather than focused on the needs or ideologies of subordinated groups. A caveat to this fact is the lack of attention to research in undergraduate teacher education programs. Once again, this absence is because the state certification tests mention neither the significance of classroom teachers conducting research nor the importance of connecting research to practice.

At STU and, specifically, within the teacher education program findings reveal we are "imprisoned by historically conditioned regimes of discourse" that structure practices (through the individuals' participation in these discourses and relations), but "destructuring" (through both individuals' formal and informal resistance to these discourses and practices) always occurs (McLaren & Dantley, as cited in Pinar et al., 2000, p. 319). During a participant group session, Constance, Klarissa, and Destiny lamented their underpreparedness for teaching ESL learners and the lack of training in bilingual education at STU. Destiny asked, "I know Spanish, but I don't know the correct Spanish. So what am I suppose to do?" Klarissa added, "Just because I know Spanish doesn't make me bilingual." And even though she has taken 5 years of Spanish, Constance retorted, "There's no way that I consider myself bilingual." I asked for suggestions to improve the STU program that would not be cost-prohibitive (like hiring another professor). Without hesitation, Klarissa recommended every STU preservice

teacher be matched with a bilingual child. Through the one-on-one mentorship, the prospective teacher might better understand the life circumstances of the child and craft suitable instructional modifications. Destiny extended the conversation, "I've started collecting stuff for my classroom, like I bought cards that are English and Spanish. If we could come up with some games in Spanish it would be great. There's a lot of Spanish people here [at STU]." According to Hollins and Guzman (2005), such deliberations are counterresistive strategies where dialogue focuses on reflexivity, the use of authentic activities, and connections to real-world circumstances.

Such resistance and connections are heard in Joey's approach. Joey laughed,

> My Spanish is getting better. When a kid says something to me in Spanish, I talk back to him in English to let him know I understand Spanish but can still speak good English…I tell them the advantages of learning English and Spanish like getting a better career in the business world.

When discussing the issues of recent immigrants, Joey made the following comment:

> They look very scared, afraid when they come in. I try to help them out…Every now and then they'll come up to me and instead of speaking Spanish, they'll ask me something in English. They will have learned something in their ESL class and they want to show me. I just smile…and reply back in Spanish and they start laughing.

First, Constance explained, "I think that especially in Texas, it's important to be bilingual," but then she reiterated the challenges.

> When there are children who just talk straight Spanish, it's a little hard to deliver instructions. I was lucky enough to have an older student who spoke Spanish. She could translate for me. It's tough. It's a tough wall. Eventually, I bought a Spanish/English dictionary and kept it with me.

From Constance, I realized that STU is disadvantaging all teacher candidates by omitting critical information and resources. Theodore confirmed these thoughts, explaining, "All new teachers should at least know the basic Spanish terms for [instructional] directions."

Klarissa suggested that we should start just as teachers do in the classrooms. Preservice teachers should label basic items in Spanish and then move forward, showing their younger students their desire to learn word for word, item by item. As we chatted, I looked around our Teacher Resource Center, finding neither an accessible Spanish–English dictionary nor items labeled in other languages. It is clear that ahead, STU must make many strides to restructure the program and practices in small and large ways.

Ebonics. When our discussions extended to children who speak Ebonics, the participants' responses recounted an understanding that each dialect or language has internal integrity, and there is no definitive line between a language and a dialect. Also, their responses indicated an understanding that the function of any language or dialect is to make sense in conveying messages and that language or dialect serves as a symbol of identity. Additionally, one's style of language is not a yardstick for measuring a person's intellect (Cullen, 2000; Delpit, 1995). The participants verbalized that code-switching from Ebonics to Standard English is, in fact, bilingualism, as speakers cross cultural linguistic borders. Their attitudes implied what Delpit (2003) stated: "One language (or dialect) clearly is not scientifically better than the other, but that one is politically more acceptable than the other" (p. 211). From multiple experiences, the participants understand with Ebonics that the meaning of certain words changes contingent on the situation at hand. For example, "Das whas sup!" can mean different concepts. But, the context, emotion, and voice inflections put behind Ebonics convey only one meaning at a time for the phrase.

The Mexican American teacher candidates spoke of the fun times of being part of a student body that enjoys reggae, jazz, rap, and hip hop music at campus events like

basketball games. After all, they came to STU believing the Black College experience would better prepare them to teach and serve multicultural communities. They are accustomed to sharing conversations peppered with Black dialect at STU. The 7 preservice Mexican American teacher candidates, however, do not consider themselves well prepared to deal with Ebonics in the public school classrooms. Their stories reveal concerns about children as well as preservice teachers who are chastised because they cannot code-switch from Black vernacular to classroom expectations for Standard English.

From reading Ladson Billings' (1992) *DreamKeepers* and Delpit's (1995) *Other People's Children*, the 7 teacher candidates have heeded the message that some teachers can effectively teach those children who enter classrooms not knowing Standard English—the linguistic codes of power. They have bought into the truism that if some teachers can do it, they can, too (Asante, 1991).

Thought provoking are the findings of Ladson-Billings (2005), who examined materials and activities offered in many teacher preparation programs. She found the required experiences and textbooks address some "alleged pathology" on the part of the Others, their families, their communities, and their cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 19). With these findings in mind, I reanalyzed the data. Still, I did not perceive the study participants' views of Ebonics as pathologic or negative. Rather, their voices acknowledged "tough" challenges ahead for both learners and teachers whose first language is Black English. Such complexities are aggravated by parents who do not value the language spoke in schools; by teachers who stereotypically judge Ebonics speakers as

"nuisances"; and by pervasive media, family, and societal environments, which are far more influential than schools.

With a tone of sadness, Constance told a story of two boys at the YMCA whose mother speaks Black English with rudeness towards others and disregard for her own children. Not only were the boys' speech patterns nonstandard, but their ability to dialogue also was limited. Constance explained, "Their speech—Ebonics—was broken sentences, not clear. It's disheartening to know these kids will have problems. But it's not all their fault, if the parent doesn't help work with them. Children learn by example."

Destiny expressed dismay about both parental and teacher behaviors that lessened her Black students' opportunities for a quality education. First, Destiny worried about the children's indoctrination by parents.

> They mimic what their environment teaches them. …Sometimes, when they get out of the car, the noise is so loud you can't even hear them slam the car door because the radio is so loud. The parents don't even say anything like goodbye. Or you hear the parents yell, "Get out!"

Second, Destiny worried that teachers stereotyped students by their language and dress or victimized them as a result of parents misconduct, not giving them a fair opportunity to learn.

> Some of the teachers form perceptions just by the way they dress or by their parents' actions. The teachers just brush them off. They treat them like they're a nuisance. Then the child opens his mouth and answers a question. I'm like surprised, "That [wisdom] came out of him?" It's like they're yelling for help, but no one helps them.

Destiny continued, "I won't correct them. I just have to find a way to help, to work around the problem. I wouldn't be judgmental."

From teaching middle school students, Joey stated being direct and kind is the best approach to affirming diverse ways of speaking: "Do what you can. Don't stress

over something you can't win. They see it on TV. Those influences are hard to battle." Nonetheless, Joey values the need to model and affirm Standard English: "I do correct them when I can in a P.E. class, but not in a way to where it's embarrassing to them."

The teacher candidates' transitions into our cultural and academic community have heightened their awareness of themselves in relation to others and of the importance of community connectedness. From this analysis, I found the 7 Mexican American teacher candidates anticipate challenges teaching in dialectically diverse classrooms. They do not espouse negative attitudes or lowered teacher expectations for students who speak a Black vernacular dialect. They seek to learn strategies to support their future students' abilities to style-shift or code-switch in various linguistic and social contexts. Their beliefs are grounded in the standard language ideology, which positions teachers to believe "their responsibility is to guide students to a 'correct' understanding of the English language—an understanding that often frames language as monolithic, static, and prescriptive" (Godly et al., 2006, p. 31).

The preponderance of literature about preparing teachers for dialectally diverse classrooms (Cummins, 1996; Delpit, 1995; Nieto, 2002) focuses on two lines of research: (a) reducing preservice teachers' negative beliefs about stigmatized dialects and the people who speak them and (b) sociolinguistic understandings that can help teachers develop productive pedagogical responses to students' language choices (Godly et al., 2006). Only limited literature and research focuses on helping the preservice teachers overcome language stigmatism and ridicule. Within the STU community, the debate echoes the contrast of viewpoints following the 1996 Oakland school board's decision to recognize Ebonics (Cullen, 2000). On one side, a few professors speak of valuing Black

vernacular as a resource, but by far, most STU professors rail against Ebonics, insisting that students employ Standard English in the classroom and on assignments. These viewpoints were illuminated as one African American colleague, a teacher educator, explained,

> I equate one's spoken dialect as another language system that often times is a result of geographic region, neighborhood, ethnicity, class, and caste groups. Depending on one's vocation in life, a person must be able in this global society to shift gears in language to get them what then need.

Another more outspoken STU teacher educator, also African American, recounted how she treats college students who speak Spanglish or Ebonics in the same way as she did as an English teacher in middle school classrooms.

> I will not tolerate and did not tolerate nonstandard English being spoken in my classroom because of stereotypes often associated with low SES children of color. One of the writing TEKS says students need to write in standardized English and I push this as state law, since the TAKS is a state law: TEC.110.

Critical role of teacher education. True to Anzaldua's (1987, 1999) notion of borderlands, the 7 Mexican American teacher candidates inhabit overlapping discourse communities. When asked, "Have people on this campus helped you retain your biculturalism?" Klarissa recounted, "No. I don't think so." For Constance, only a Spanish professor on campus has helped to reinforce her cultural-linguistic heritage: "He's the only person, besides the times that I go to Mexico." When asked, "Has your culture been dismissed or suppressed at STU?" Klarrisa answered, "Not so much uncomfortable or having to hide it. But more so, having to adapt to the culture in order to fit in. …It's like you have to adapt." Constance added, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Well, it's the same way here." Susan commented, "I've tried to get along here. I've gone to their

church services. Having a church on campus is important. We all have some type of religion that ties us together."

Such conversations provide evidence that these Mexican American preservice teachers crisscross cultural and linguistic borders. Circumstances often position them as bidilectical or trilingual (Cullen, 2000). They are skilled in reading and negotiating a variety of academic and social cultures, a Black–White mainstream culture, and their own community (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). Within the HBCU they have found a transitory space—a political border that offers positioning of Otherness as well as safety and enrichment (Pugh et al., 2000).

Language and languages are a defining aspect of culture; however, the significance of language development, language and dialect variations, and bilingualism at STU is primarily discussed in reading courses but rarely elsewhere. Within the teacher preparation program, the pedagogy professed for supporting young students' education is not necessarily what is offered teacher candidates. Administration profess to value language training but in reality do little. STU offers no designated courses in ESL or bilingual training. The bottom line is the cost of adding more faculty according to STU administrators. (Seeing this void, I have strived to incorporate readings and materials in coursework to supplement needed training for teaching second-language learners.) Candidates, therefore, receive only minimal instruction and strategies to help schoolchildren transition from Spanglish or from Ebonics to Standard English. Still, the Mexican American preservice teachers are encouraged to accept bilingual or ESL student-teaching assignments in multicultural settings.

Cognizant of shortcomings steeped in a Eurocentric curriculum of White male theorists, we have introduced theorists of Color, like Freire and Banks, and female theorists, like Delpit, Valenzuela, and Ladson-Billings. Aligned with our program's ideology, the 7 participants testified to the significance of building on the strengths of diverse student populations. Susan, Joey, and Theodore explained how valuing a child's first language can be a link to promoting academic achievement. The others, Klarissa and Destiny, stated it is far more valuable to engage a younger student in ideas than to circle his or her errors on assignments.

In contrast, within our preparation program we cannot simply focus on candidates' ideas. I find myself jumping to correct candidates' grammatical errors as a form of protection for them (and for the reputation of the university). Whereas bilingual magazines like *Latina* successfully promote articles in English or Spanish and are utilized as resources, the preservice teachers are rarely encouraged to present poetry or their work in Spanish. The prospective teachers are not welcomed to interject phrases like "Holla!" or "Why you trippin on a brutha?" in their conversations or writings. Our academic assignments do not accommodate languages other than English. Instead, the STU teacher education program strives to "rescue candidates," because what is euphemistically called Spanglish or Ebonics at STU is considered *bad* English. As Cullen (2000) noted, "Academe is not the friendliest environment for American dialects. …Twenty-first century culture, then, is ahead of academia" (pp. 266, 268).

Tensions of Class in the Development of Community

Class dynamics adds yet another dimension to explain the Mexican American teacher candidates' experiences at STU. For these teacher candidates, their education

represents more than a desire to teach and effect change. Their aspirations as teachers are intertwined with the effort to improve their families' class standing. Their goals represent the American Dream—the belief that those who study and work hard can get ahead and achieve success. While dreams contain hopes of what we want, they also contain oppressions of what we cannot have.

In this section the perspectives of Mexican American preservice teachers tell a story of how class-imposed oppressions impact their pursuit of a college education. Here *oppression* refers to the disadvantages and injustices that some students suffer because of their low-income status as well as established policies and practices of a well-intentioned liberal society that systemically reproduces inequalities (Bennett, McWhorter, & Kuykendall, 2006). This section begins with an explanation of paradoxical ideologies perpetuated and aggravated by the enterprise of education, continues with an analytic framework to investigate macro and micro class tensions within the community, and then reveals the teacher candidates' stories of schooling practices that perpetuate oppressions.

Class refers to stratified relations that govern and constrain individual and group experiences regarding income level, occupation, education, place of residence, and other indicators of status and social rank (McLaren 2003). More than just a question of economics, class shapes values, attitudes, social relations, and the ways through which knowledge is given and received. Even within critical scholarship, relatively few studies trace the links between class and preparation of teachers. Zumwalt and Craig (2005) reported, "We know the least about teachers' SES backgrounds" or how class differences influence teacher education programs (p. 148). From the limited existing literature, I have depended heavily on Knapp and Woolverton's (2004) treatise of "Social Class and

Schooling." Also helpful is Weber and Dillaway's (2002) conceptual framework for understanding connections between tenets of American ideologies and systems of oppression.

According to Weber (2001), the premise of the American Dream—to achieve a college education—detracts attention from systemic processes that inequitably educate groups stratified by class, race, and gender. This ideology is located and perpetuated via *democratic capitalism*, which is the paradoxical belief in political democracy but not economic democracy. Democracy is a political system in which power is vested in the government by the people and justified by the principle of social *equality*. In contrast, the system of capitalism is based on the pursuit of profit and private ownership, resulting in pervasive economic *inequality* (Weber, 2001).

In short, the U.S. educational system promotes the American Dream ideology, which is used to justify extensive social inequalities in society. The premise is that all citizens have an equal chance to earn success or in many cases to earn failure. In actuality, the educational system supports a race, class, and gender hierarchy. For example, in the U.S. public high school, students are grouped according to ability. The result of this grouping is that curriculum is organized along a factory management model, and the Eurocentric culture is promoted as superior to all others. This educational model creates the notion that people become wealthy and powerful through a natural sorting process that is fair and that separates the best from all others. "It also supports the related notion that those who are not powerful will never acquire power because they lack the ability and that we therefore live in the best of all possible worlds" (Oakes et al., as cited in Weber, 2001, p. 124). Weber (2001) wrote, "This process of denying structural sources

for oppression—and thus structural change as a solution—is reinforced not only by promoting images of inferiority of some groups but also by promoting equally damaging constructions that others are superior" (p. 130).

Class versus education: sharing the burden of liability. As with the other Mexican American teacher candidates encumbered by class constraints, Destiny exerted extreme pressure on herself to succeed "intellectually" in her quest for upward mobility. Though Destiny hopes to secure a teaching position to ease her economic anxieties, she also realizes that her college experiences have impressed upon her son lessons about education and hard work.

> I don't want to live the rest of my life, paycheck to paycheck. Or wonder, what about a rainy day? It's made me have character, but in a good way. I don't want my son to have everything handed to him. I show my son how much it costs to go to school…you have to get good grades and know what it takes: hard work.

Destiny and other Mexican American teacher candidates prove Knapp and Woolverton's (2004) observation that "Americans would rather cling to the notion of school as the great social equalizer, offering a set of experiences that permits individuals to transcend the boundaries of social class" (p. 665). The teacher candidates have realized that without a college education, they are cut off from many desirable life options. More than any other social institution, the educational system is supposed to be the place of opportunity for all. Just as critical scholars point out, these candidates understand that one's education influences one's social class standing and one's access to positions of power. Whether they realize it or not, social class is fundamental to understanding the workings and consequences of educational institutions.

The omission of social class from serious discussion and study in teacher preparation programs heightens the likelihood that class-based differential teaching will

continue to the detriment of students (Kanpp & Woolverton, 2004). As hooks (2003) pointed out, "Nowhere is there a more intense silence about the reality of class differences than in educational settings. Class differences are particularly ignored in classrooms" (p. 142). Critical educators have contended that schools actually work against the class interests of those students who are most economically and politically vulnerable within society (Apple, 2003; Darder et al., 2003; Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Weber, 2001).

While multicultural education is focused on issues of race and racism, critical pedagogy primarily grew out of class struggles, directly opening up "very difficult and painful issues" (Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004, p. 243). These sorts of class struggles and issues are clearly a part of STU Mexican American teacher candidates' lives. As chapters 4 and 5 reveal, these teacher candidates experience significant anxieties from dealing with welfare assistance, financial-aid packaging, insufficient medical care, no child support, substandard housing, overcrowded or dangerous neighborhoods, and inadequate transportation. These anxieties, coupled with teacher candidates' objections to less academically challenging instruction and to those faculty members who relinquished standards to oblige cantankerous classmates, burden their capacity to learn. Instead of being able to focus their energies and intellectual capacity on learning, these students are forced to cope with "physical and emotional concerns unrelated to the academic tasks of school" (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004, p. 668).

Factors of class cannot be separated from intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, culture, and sexuality, but the social-class composition of students in any given institution or program "shapes perception of ability, expectations for success, the education offered

to them, and their way of responding to it" (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004, p. 676). As defined, critical pedagogy involves not only the teacher's approach, but also reciprocal engagements infused among teachers and students in addressing adversities in the everyday conditions of life (Darder et al., 2003). Choices and decisions about policies, curriculum, and pedagogy convey "overt and covert lessons about learners' intrinsic worth and prospects for success" (Knapp & Woolverton, p. 674). Through a funds of knowledge approach, teachers and students use social and cultural capital at hand for instruction and opportunities to think about the implications of education and their work (Moll & Gonzales, 2004).

Macro and micro level investigations of class implications on education. After considering two analytical approaches to studying systems of class oppression, it seems logical to combine the advice of Weber and Dillaway (2002) with that of Knapp and Woolverton (2004). According to Weber and Dillaway, investigations about the impact of class on groups should start at the macro level, looking at how class issues and conditions of society affect what happens to students in schools, and then to proceed at the micro level, looking at face-to-face interactions that constitute the everyday lives of individuals. A key component of the analysis is specifying the connections between these two levels. Such a framework helps illustrate that class as well as race, gender, and sexuality are socially constructed, historically, globally, and geographically specific power relations. Such power relations are simultaneously expressed at the macro (institutional) and micro (individual) levels. The meaning of these relations changes over time and in different contexts (Weber & Dillaway).

To illuminate class dynamics, Knapp and Woolverton (2004) provided four explanations (overlapping complexities) about class implications in differentiated schooling experiences (which start at the macro level and continue to the individual level). By illuminating the four explanations, light is shed on both the role of class in educational institutions like STU and the impact of class dynamics on students. This analysis looks critically at the nature of candidates' experiences, examining how multiple systems of inequality operate in a person's sense of who he or she is and can become. The four explanations are the following: (a) class implicated in the nature of communities served by the school; (b) the intentions of powerful interests inside and outside the system, which may shape the educational environment more than do the needs of its students; (c) the nature and capabilities of the teaching force and the conditions under which teachers work; and (d) the nature of the students and their responses to schooling.

1. *Macrolevel:* Knapp and Woolverton (2004) began by arguing that class is implicated in the nature of communities served by the school. Institutions that differ in social-class profile reflect differences in power and in the ability to advocate their interests both individually, as an entity, and collectively, for community members. Universities that serve mostly wealthy or high-status students hold the most power. Conversely, colleges and universities like STU that serve high percentages of working-class students have less power and less ability to advocate for their interests.

2. *Macrolevel:* Furthermore, Knapp and Woolverton (2004) observed that the intentions of powerful interests inside and outside the system may shape the educational environment more than do the needs of its students. Explicit mandates and decisions by institutional leaders respond to key constituencies like gifts from alumni or corporate

interests and, in doing so, support different curricula or internships to be pursued. Thereby, leaders of the small HBCUs must find ways to stretch resources and to reconcile underfunding from large corporations' disinterest and from relatively small contributions of alumni and donors. No matter the size of the institution, decisions regarding policies and requirements directly affect the economic circumstances of students' lives as well as prospects for graduating and attaining credentials. Moreover, Americans deny or "prefer not to dissect how educational systems inextricably permeate and reconstitute the layering of society into distinct classes" (Knapp & Woolverton, p. 661). In effect, lower class educational institutions function to reproduce the class structure of the workplace (Apple, 2003; Giroux, 2003).

Since STU is located in close proximity to six other institutions of higher learning, the Mexican American teacher candidates were vocal about the haves and have-nots when discussing STU's neglected athletics facilities, lack of summer school classes, and limited library holdings. For example, the athletes, Klarissa, Louis, and Joey, spoke of the lack of resources for sports programs at STU, such as having only one trainer for all sports, no "real" weight room, no institutionally owned baseball field or track field, and only one gymnasium (with "a basement that floods when it rains"). Of the athletes, Joey received a partial athletic scholarship and Klarissa fulfilled criteria to keep her academic scholarship for 4 years. Despite the shortcomings of resources, all 3 athletes felt they had benefited from their sports experiences at STU. On the other hand, since athletics consumes much of their time during the school year, they expressed dismay that STU did not offer a selection of courses every semester or in summer school. Primarily,

summer school is not a viable option for STU students, because most federal monies do not cover summer school.

Joey jokingly admonished the library's antiquated environment: "It's like going into an Egyptian tomb, but eventually I found what I needed." Theodore also expressed regret over STU's meager library holdings. Yet, with his signature problem-solving attitude he added, "You can always go over to [another large university's] libraries or use the Internet." Theodore also noted STU's lack of funding from corporations or private donors: "I believe the perception of HBCUs is that they're behind the times, always trying to catch up with the large institutions. The image needs to change to snare more financial support."

3. *Microlevel:* The third way in which class intrudes into the learning environment is through the nature and capabilities of the teaching force and the conditions under which teachers work. Typically, faculty in a working-class context is seen as less capable, on average, than those in high-status, research-driven universities. Teachers of talent are drawn to the status of research universities by incentives of greater rewards, improved working conditions, higher salary, or enhanced prestige. For some faculty members in a working-class context, however, the matter of choice is less one of teaching prestige and more a match between their ideology and social-class sensibilities and the students they teach. Teachers gravitate by choice to the class-based context in which they feel most at home or most committed to teach. Such is the case in recognizing the commitment of my five colleagues in the teacher education program at STU. In my opinion they are gifted educators grounded in the university's mission to teach learners from diverse backgrounds. Of the 7 participants, only Theodore and Susan have attended

other large universities with holdings, resources, and a teaching force far beyond the scope of STU. Even so, Theodore, Susan, and the others believed that the availability of small classes and thus more meaningful relations with faculty at STU outweighed the larger classes and economic perks offered at expansive educational settings.

4. *Microlevel:* Finally, there is the nature of the students and their responses to schooling. As individuals and in peer groups, the learners approach the social and intellectual milieu of colleges and universities with highly variant background experiences and different worldviews and values. Learners identified from working-class origins tend to be perceived as less capable than they probably are, whereas those from communities located higher in the class hierarchy tend to be perceived more academically astute. Historically, over much outcry, educators and educational policymakers have tended to attach notions of deficits or assets to differences in students' class backgrounds (Anyon, 1997; Apple, 1979; Asante, 1991; Bartlome & Balderrama, 2001; Embry, 2006; Freire, 1968; hooks, 1994, 2003a; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1998; Nieto, 2001, 2004b). The more diverse the community, the more likely questions arise about meeting the diversity of students' needs. Hence, class affects students' educational outcomes by influencing how faculty perceive students, followed by the types of instruction faculty offer them, the experiences targeted for their success, and their ways of responding.

Interestingly, when asked, "What can be learned from Mexican American students and teachers?" I anticipated positive responses from these preservice teachers. Instead, they seemed entangled by their own assessment. With characteristic defiance, Susan replied, "Nothing. A Mexican American teacher is not any different." Among

other responses, Theodore's remains the most thought provoking, because he so quickly associated Mexican American teacher with class hierarchies.

> I'm still working on this. We have some marked problems that don't allow us to help each other. There's competitiveness that is deep in us that goes back generations, different tribes, different classes of people. I think class structure is very detrimental. …It's the system, the schools, the community. …We have a lot of them giving up. It's important to have teachers challenge you.

Perhaps I should have questioned him about his frustrations, but I held back to listen. His thoughts trailed into a story about Elena Torres, a revolutionary educator who founded schools for the poor. His tone indicated that he saw himself as also helping the underclass.

> I once read that after the Mexican Revolution, the peasants were demanding schools. A woman named Elena Torres organized teachers in order to have schools. …I will always be proud to be a teacher.

Here stands just one example in which Theodore influenced my teaching. Since I was neither familiar with Elena Torres nor the early educational movement for peasants in the Southwest United States and Mexico, I went to the Internet to glean more information and later threaded this knowledge about Senorita Torres into lessons. Still, I ask myself, does such information perpetuate class structure or better open student discussions? Am I patronizing, helping, or harming?

Foregrounding teacher candidates' experiences to reconceptualize pedagogy. How has earlier schooling censured these students' chances for success in college? Implications of the Mexican Americans preservice teachers' earlier schooling follow the classic stratified patterns, where students who attend less segregated schools in more affluent neighborhoods fare better with academics in college and specifically on standardized tests. Even within middle-class segregated schools of Color, those students

enrolled in the honors or advanced placement track are being well prepared for menial jobs rather than for college (Anyon, 1997; Kozol, 1991; Weber, 2001). U.S. higher education also has established a relationship to the economic corporate structure as the credentialing institution for the new middle class of professionals, managers, and administrators. "The process of tracking students for different educations and different places in the social order remains a primary source of social inequality today" (Weber, 2001, p. 140).

> Those who are disadvantaged in the educational system—poor and working-class students, students of color, girls, and gay, bisexual, and lesbian students—have the fewest economic resources [money], political resources [influence, control over school boards], and ideological resources [expertise, knowledge of the system], control of media to bring about change. (Weber, 2001, p. 151)

Consequently, if this argument predicts education failure or success according to the class, race, and gender of students populating a school or college, we also must explore what this argument obscures.

Theodore, Klarissa, and Constance attended large city schools with enrollments of 2,000 or more. Klarrissa and Constance, however, zigzagged several times from poor to wealthier neighborhood schools. Susan, Joey, and Destiny attended the one high school in their midsize suburban towns, so each was exposed to a student body of varied class and race. Successful in honor classes until she made one B- grade, Susan protested to no avail her mother's insistence that she transfer to regular classes. She could not convince her mother of the significance of the honors program, because her mother believed it was better to make all As in regular classes. Whereas Joey achieved academically, especially in mathematics, and held multiple leadership positions in high school, Destiny sustained a lower profile, overcoming her earlier 13 operations for hearing impairment. Coming from

a tiny, rural South Texas town, Louis admittedly studied only enough to remain eligible to play sports. Even with athletics, Louis noted the huge disparities in learning opportunities. He was never exposed to sports expertise or training in technique:

> Back home, I was the only pitcher; we barely had enough players to make a team. They didn't teach us they way the teach in a big city. It was like, "Here's the ball, let's play." But here, they teach the kids everything.

Sadly, by their senior year neither Destiny nor Louis had overcome inequalities of earlier schooling. They lacked of exposure to the cultural capital and academic capital so taken for granted on standardized tests like the THEA, TExES and PRAXIS I and II.

Similar to experiences of teacher candidates described in this study are the stories of prospective teachers explored by Bennett et al. (2006). Bennett et al. conducted longitudinal research at a large university with undergraduates identified as minority-ethnic, low-income, and with the genuine desire to teach—"a missionary zeal about teaching" (p. 552). The analysis interrogated "the pain of their experiences" regarding the preservice teachers' attempts to pass high-stakes standardized tests, specifically the PRAXIS I & II (Bennett et al., p. 569). Bennett et al. focused on factors such as earlier *inferior schooling* and *stereotype threat*. What is different in Bennett et al.'s research is the context (a large predominantly White university in Indiana), the number of research participants (44 Latino/a and African American students), and the specific focus on participants' attitudes and abilities for test taking. Findings not only acknowledged "a great amount of diversity within the minority student admissions test phenomenon" (Bennett et al., p. 548), but also resonated with similar hardships endured by 3 of the Mexican American teacher candidates in this study. Whereas Susan, Joey, Klarissa, and Constance fared well in college, Theodore struggled with mathematics (since he was 20

years out of high school), and Destiny and Louis confronted academic woes that, at the time of this writing, prevented teacher licensure.

Like Destiny and Louis's histories, the Bennett et al. (2006) article illuminates educational disparities of college students of Color who previously had attended schools characterized by the *pedagogy of poverty*. They attended de facto segregated high schools in predominantly low-income neighborhoods and were placed in lower tracked classes. Of those who consistently failed the admissions test for entry into teacher education, "none had developed the cultural capital knowledge needed to mediate the PRAXIS I test" (Bennett et al., p. 566). Those who passed had engaged in "style flexing" when required; that is, they drew from an inner bicultural strength that moved them from ethnic-centered to Eurocentric engagement. Of significance, "they feel strength from affirmations of being African American or Latino, helping them deal with the stress of racial tensions associated with stereotype threat" (Bennett et al., p. 563).

Those who failed were unfamiliar with a strong Eurocentric vocabulary and did not relate to test content like "skydiving" and "boating," which created "a sense of disconnection (resulting in strained concentration during the test) and not being motivated to learn the material" (Bennett et al., 2006, p. 563). Bennett et al. found the strongest indicators of attainment of PRAXIS I cut-off scores were high school SAT scores and ethnic identity scores. "Students who have deficit skills in reading, writing, or mathematics do not catch up via preparation sessions without additional coursework" (Bennett et al., p. 568). Furthermore, overwhelming inequities become reproduced inequalities through university policies and practices, "including the requirement to pass an admissions test that is biased against them" (Bennett et al., p. 563). According to the

authors, *direct oppression* via societal policies and practices *leads to indirect oppressions*, when these poorly prepared students cannot compete with their better prepared peers and do not qualify to become educators. Underpreparedness results in "greater cost" in both personal pride and cultural pride (Bennett et al., p. 567). Such costs are evidenced in Louis and Destiny's disillusionment that neither hard work nor determination guarantees fulfillment of the American Dream.

From both Klarissa and Constance I learned about their challenges transitioning from schools in lower income, then middle-class, and later to upper middle-class neighborhoods. Both commented on the pitfalls of working to "fit" into different cultural groups as well as the challenges of earning acceptable grades at the more affluent schools. As Constance explained,

> At that east side elementary I wasn't worried about learning, I was trying to stay alive. …Then we moved, I made a complete change. …At my high school the people who took AP courses, more or less hung out with each other. It kind of felt like they would snub their nose at the people who just took regular high school classes.

Moving to schools in the wealthier neighborhoods helped Constance and Klarissa instill the cultural capital knowledge prevalent on standardized tests. In contrast to Destiny's isolation in high school, Klarissa and Constance's extracurricular activities helped to substantiate a sense of connectedness and cultural capital. To some degree Klarissa and Constance feel more privileged than the others in this study. They know they do not struggle, academically or economically, as much as Louis and Destiny must to be successful. Yet, all of the Mexican American preservice teachers choose to teach in culturally diverse urban schools as a way to give back and to help children become better prepared. Whether in their internship reflections or voiced during class discussions, the

teacher candidates often compared policies and practices of schools located in the east, central, and west sections of town. They were aghast at the stark differences in teaching styles, discipline behavior expectations, and pedagogies.

In an e-mail, Susan fumed about the mismatch of teachers' attitudes, curriculum, and students' lives. She especially fumed about the dissonance perpetrated on "working-class" Spanish speakers.

> Textbooks are written for middle-class students. We have so many students who cannot translate the textbooks due to cultural differences. Maybe we need to rephrase the term and say the *non*-working-class, welfare families. Based on their student's lacking socioeconomic conditions, some teachers teach at lower standards. You can't make teachers like someone, especially if they are racist. Racism is not only about color of skin, but poverty and so on.

Louis was also highly vocal about the overrepresentation of ethnic students, low-income students, and misdiagnosed students in special education classrooms. He described former teachers who wanted to place his younger brother in special education classes, not because of diagnosed learning problems but because of excessive absences. As is typical with many first-generation college students, Louis has assumed the parental role as caretaker of his two younger siblings. After trying unsuccessfully to negotiate with school officials at their hometown school, Louis moved his brothers to another city and enrolled them in regular classes in a nearby metropolitan high school. The brothers immediately made a complete turnaround and began to like school. Louis now sees the same scenario happening with children in the middle school special education program where he interns.

> My brother, he's a perfect example, because they wanted to stick him in special ed. I had to go back to talk to the school. My brother, he's ADHD, real hyper. He was getting into trouble. The teacher said it was all his fault. If I'm not mistaken, he had missed 70 days last year. That's what his transcript said. My other brother

had missed 35 or 40. Since they've been here, they've had zero absences. He's making all As and Bs. Now he's thinking about going into the Marines.

Like Louis's objections that his brothers and he did not receive quality education in their hometown schools, some of the most bitter struggles in education are over the content of education—particularly what is taught or is not taught to low-income and ethnic-minority populations. At the center of contention is the struggle of groups and educational institutions to define themselves and to assert their value and worth. In small HBCUs, the students' everyday experiences of domination, oppression, and resistance shape the way that students and faculty interact and influence self-esteem, identities, aspirations, and their views of and relationships to others. Such experiences, however, are not totally determining, because the individuals face these challenges in many ways, with different personal and social resources. Even more, a hope arises out of the concrete struggles currently being waged by these Mexican American teacher candidates' quest for equity and social justice through the course of U.S. education. Findings provide evidence that these preservice teachers are joining in discussions and transformations to comprehend how different curricula can be interpreted and used. For example, curricula can be read by focusing on how different groups might respond to them, illuminating "the possibilities of reading against, within, and outside the established boundaries" (Giroux, 1992, p. 30).

To make classroom instruction work—and the preparation of teachers viable—schooling cannot be encapsulated from society. The professors, preservice teachers, and students must go beyond the classroom walls to accommodate the knowledge and practices of neighborhood cultures. They must develop the "consciousness of the mestiza at the crossroads of race, ethnicity, class, and gender" (McKenna, 2003, p. 435). For

example, Susan stated even such accommodations as stapling "a poster about Mexico to the wall is not going to make a difference, if the teacher doesn't accept all children." She sounded especially frustrated with teachers who sermonize about unfortunate populations but are insensitive to the realities of their own students' lives.

> Just like culture, poverty is the same thing. Just because you study about homeless people one day, then the next day you ask the parents to send $2.00 to school so the child can go on a field trip. That shows you really don't accept the child for who he really is.

If such "subjectivities of teacher and students are not questioned, exposed, integrated into the process of classroom, then the reading and rereading of text will not make a qualitative difference" (McKenna, 2003, p. 435). Susan went on to say that "role playing is really important" in teacher training, making a reference to scenarios of parent conferences she and other teacher candidates had dramatized. Susan appreciated examining the perspectives of the teacher and the parent in honoring the knowledge that the parent brings to the table and in learning ways to collaborate with parents or guardians to solve problems.

Such attempts to change the status quo involve alterations in the relations of power, whereby the preservice teachers and parents or professors reciprocally collaborate about viewpoints and instructional strategies (Moll & Gonzales, 2004). To this end, the professor must facilitate and the teacher candidates must accept their role to develop counter discourses**.** Such resistance measures are occurring in Louis's advocacy for high school boys wrongly assigned to special education classes, in Susan's vigilance to raise the status of students from low-income homes, in Theodore's instructional modifications to better include Spanish-dominant speakers, and in Joey's cajoling Spanish and Ebonics speakers to speak standard English in P.E. classes. When these prospective teachers seize

opportunities to counter the established boundaries of knowledge, they are not only crossing, challenging, and reconfiguring the borders, but also creating borderlands (Anzaldua, 1999; McKenna 2003).

Linking Critical Pedagogy to Enduring, Situated, and Endangered Lives

From the literature I realized similarities in definitions of *critical pedagogy* and *situated self*. Whereas critical pedagogy is a proactive collegial endeavor among students and teachers, the construct of situated self resides in the individual's anticipation and value-response to context and experiences. Both constructs can be used to highlight tools of privilege and oppression in recruiting and supporting college students of Color who wish to become teachers.

To examine the psychosocial nature of change, Spindler and Hammond (2000) explored the situated self in not only how one develops and evolves within a particular location, but also how the person transforms the given context and activities. It is the situated self (or, more appropriately, selves) in response to necessity that makes sense of a situation. The situated self represents the shifting of values, beliefs, and practices as a result of new contexts and new knowledge (Spindler, 2006).

Similarly, the enterprise of critical pedagogy challenges teachers and students to recognize and critique, in order to transform existing practices that produce and sustain oppressive conditions (Darder et al., 2003; Greene, 1996; Leitsyna et al., 1996). As an interdisciplinary transformative process, critical pedagogy changes with each unique social or classroom context. Critical pedagogy creates a space to engage in critical dialogue in which constituents produce their own values and a counter discourse to make sense of their world and their interactions therein. "By becoming aware of both the

positions they inhabit and the locations from which they speak, students and teachers are better able to take responsibility for their beliefs and actions" (Leitstyna & Woodrum, 1996, p. 7).

Also, we can draw the parallel between *enduring and endangered selves* and *critical pedagogy*. The enduring self represents the continuity that exists in our lives, of which beliefs, values, and practices are constructed through our cultural communities. In effect, the critical classroom is the cultural community that constitutes a pedagogy and politics of identity, difference, and resistance to conformity and materialism (Leitsyna et al., 1996). While schooling offers students, particularly low-income students, the possibilities of less burdened and constrained lives and greater empowerment, it simultaneously positions them in highly charged conflicts, not easy to resolve (Olnec, 2004). Thereby, the endangered self denotes formidable challenges and conflicts between the situated self and enduring self. The conflicts may be entirely conscious or deeply masked and may be of short or long duration. The endangered self may be the "decisive factor in whether or not goals and tasks can be achieved" (Spindler, 2006, p. 67). For the pedagogical community, the charge is to support constituents' engagement in critical consciousness and cultural remapping by taking positive action to diminish perils and to avoid putting students' identities on trial (Giroux, 1992).

The pervasiveness of the study participants' anxieties in crossing socioeconomic borders caused me to examine further the literature (and absence of literature) about class implications on education. Had I known much earlier to deliberate questions advised by Weber and Dillaway (2002), perhaps, these findings would be even more insightful. Nonetheless, the questions remain significant to energize critical pedagogy while

critiquing experiences and perceptions of the Mexican American teacher candidates' lives. The key questions are the following: What societal or institutional economic and political practices shape students' actions and views? Are oppressed group members aware of the power structures of their situation? Is there evidence they have accepted the controlling limits on their lives, or do they resist? What role does pedagogy play in antagonizing or assisting teacher candidates to achieve success?

While deliberating these questions, the candidates' fatigue from disparities of financial insecurity repeatedly surfaced. They bemoaned the tediousness of the weight of procuring financial loans, all the while taking a full semester of courses, attending to family's needs, and (except Susan) working a minimal-wage, evening-weekend job. The teacher candidates (and most other students at STU) need loans for tuition and living expenses. As Destiny explained, "I've asked for two loans! Right now I'm thinking survival, not debt." These teacher candidates from poor or working-class backgrounds are highly dependent not only on the stipend for tuition but also on an allotment for living expenses.

Although each college student's financial aid is packaged differently according to family income and other criteria, generally a loan provides 80% of tuition cost and a $1,500–2,000 "refund" for living expenses per 4-month semester in fall or spring, but not the summer school semester. At STU refund checks are not guaranteed to be available within a certain time after a semester begins, which significantly raise anxieties. Also, at STU loan recipients are never sure about the exact amount of refund payment they are due, because of lack of clear communication and confusing financial statements created by STU staff.

Susan twice received overpayments. Both times, 6 weeks later STU notified her of their mistake and demanded an immediate return of the overage. Such anguish about the mystery of financial refunds—the uncertainty of amount or arrival time of payment—appears the norm. Such stress drains energy from the preservice teachers' studies or from their personal and family needs. Furthermore, a student-loan recipient owes and must work out payment for the remaining 20% of the tuition bill by the semester's end or, in some cases, before graduation.

When reflecting on challenges of schooling, Susan commented, "For me, race wasn't a problem, more a problem of economics." Louis explained, "Applying to college seems overwhelming." As a first-generation college student, Louis was unfamiliar with the application and loan process. He received no help from high school personnel and, on his own, made some unwise decisions that involved high credit financing. Throughout this study and their tenure at STU, all 7 Mexican American teacher candidates suffered from financial insecurity, which interfered with their schooling and fieldwork. According to Destiny, "Sometimes minorities don't come to school because of finances, not because they don't want an education at STU. It's finances."

Such worries permeated most conversations, like the discussion between Klarissa and Constance concerning their debts from school loans and the hassle of filling out the paperwork. In her 3rd year of college, Constance was not sure of the exact amount, saying, "I think I'm only like $10,000 in debt for loan repayment." Constance's specific gripe was that the system does not take into account unavoidable circumstances like her parents' deteriorating health, downsized jobs, and rising inflation.

> My parents' income just keeps going down, down, down and still bills and lots of expenses. Each year the EFC just keeps going up, up and up and up. When filling

> out the form, it doesn't have a spot for other expenses, just what your family makes.

Klarissa replied, "You have to be real careful filling it out." Mostly Klarissa worried about Destiny: "Last summer she didn't have money to pay for gas or electricity or a phone. …I don't know how she can make it to graduation." Such concern for a fellow student is just one example of conditions of austerity causing teacher candidates to bond for emotional support and sharing of funds of knowledge (Moll & Gonzales, 2004).

When asked, "Do you feel you have had the same opportunities as other people?" Louis replied, "I don't really know, because I've never been offered anything to go anywhere else." From Louis (and the others) I heard this sense of the unknown about the greater world, specifically in their comparisons between middle-class and working-class people. For Constance, as opposed to austerities of working-class conditions that obligate hard work, the status of middle class offers some security and some choices.

> Working class is like living paycheck to paycheck. Paychecks don't roll over. Middle-class people don't have to work as hard, and they have the financial stability to have fun, take small trips, and what not.

Klarissa jumped into the conversation: "I want to travel. I've never been on a trip since I was 13."

Joey, Destiny, and Louis are considering graduate school, but the lack of finances make the dream unfathomable. When thinking about his future, Louis views himself as a member of his collective Latino ancestry and believes that education is one pathway to a better quality of life.

> Some of us Hispanics would like to go on, but we have to take care of our families…of course, I have money problems. …My parents aren't educated. I want to get my masters. I want to do something with my life.

Klarissa juggles the reality of already taking responsibility of caring for her terminally ill grandmother and the prospect of assuming the bills and a house payment that her mother cannot meet. In the following excerpt, Klarissa contrasted her concepts of middle- and working-class circumstances:

> Middle class is where they have a house that they own. Working class are people still trying to pay off the mortgage. …It's like their house is never paid off. The kids go right into working and struggling to pay off whatever the parent accrued. It's a never-ending cycle.

Klarissa's story is emblematic of the other study participants' lives. They not only carry their own financial load but also must assume the burdens of one to two earlier generations of family debt.

After pondering Weber and Dillaway's (2002) questions about implications of class on students' educations, I found that the Mexican American preservice teachers' beliefs and actions are dominated by socioeconomic dreams and constraints. The teacher candidates stay frustrated and wearied by the system's onerous enrollment-tuition-loan process along with uncertainties about rising schooling costs and debt repayments. They continue to engage in such oppressive practices of power based on the hope that graduation and procurement of a teaching position someday will reduce financial burdens. Their determination to graduate from college serves as an act of resistance to perceived inequalities.

Because of his family's immediate needs and lack of financial security, Louis faced a crucial decision to graduate without student teaching and thus noncertification. Louis needed full-day, salaried employment with benefits and needed to continue working weekends at the grocery store. This decision was not what he wanted, but Louis believes there is no recourse. Louis intends to accept a teacher-assistant position in a

special education classroom at a local high school and then start again to pursue teacher certification via an alternative certification route. If this plan materializes, Louis will add at least $7,500 in tuition costs to his procurement of teacher certification. In querying this necessary change in Louis's plans, I was reminded of Ladson-Billings' (2005) words: "Education destroys something in part of the cruel duality of the working-class student in higher education" (p. 76). What lingers in Louis's case is the cruelty of regret and postponement of dreams.

Summary

The HBCU is a transitory space—a political border that offers positioning of Others as well as safety, enrichment, and comfort. Even the act of enrolling at a HBCU for these 7 Mexican American teacher candidates was a political stance. With this stance the teacher candidates became border crossers in the borderlands, moving away from the belief in sameness as the key to racial harmony.

Building on the concept of border crossers in the borderlands, this study used CRT, borderlands consciousness (Latina/o critical theory), and critical pedagogy to frame the analysis and writings. Each method offered different emphasis and new insights. The constructs of CRT, borderlands consciousness, and critical pedagogy were linked to the three notions of self, a psychosocial framework for examining the nature of change and transformation (Spindler, 2006; Spindler & Hammond, 2000). Given the institutional backdrop, it was significant to examine how the context shaped the activity as well as the participants' experiences and interpretations (Stake, 2006). The situated life at times strengthened the enduring self or grew endangered. Each notion advances the understanding of the other. Moving back and forth from data to the literature allowed a

deep analysis of the Mexican American teacher candidates' experiences and perspectives in overcoming structural and cultural barriers.

Findings through the lens of CRT revealed how intersections of class, race, gender, and age informed teacher candidates' lives inside and outside the university and, at times, took a physical and psychological toll. Investigations of experiential knowledge illuminated ways that teacher candidates' social and cultural capital were valued or not valued by the university. Recognizing "discrimination always helps somebody—those with the most power" (Nieto, 2002, p. 20), CRT interrogations highlighted misuses of power relations at STU. These were policies and practices that mismanaged, underserved, or subtracted from the teacher candidates' well-being. Even in a predominantly Black institution, racism was evidenced when faculty and textbooks disregarded indigenous groups, specifically Mexican American issues and viewpoints, during class discussions. Some of the study participants did not sense genuine invitations, beyond tokenism, to contribute their cultural histories and insights to academic conversations. Thus, race-neutral and assimilation ideologies did not resolve conflict and ultimately worked to deculturalize the participants. Although the Mexican American teacher candidates expressed continued respect for "Blackness" personified at STU, some regretted that they did not have equitable access to leadership or financial opportunities.

By focusing on borderlands consciousness, the teacher candidates revealed awareness of multiple identities, which shift according to context, and of split consciousness, a connection with a collective cultural past and a different cultural presence. At times, they identified with neither Mexican cultural values nor those of Anglo or African American origin. Yet, as Freire (1992) affirmed, the language of

possibilities emerges when the tormented or marginalized construct their own voices and validate their own contradictory experiences. Through dogged determination (as active agents in their own education), the Mexican American teacher candidates persisted in taking pride in opportunities at STU, while simultaneously trying to combat mediocrity and less rigorous standards at the university. From experiences at STU, the preservice teachers are strengthening funds of knowledge, which they can draw on as they build pedagogy and relations with Others.

Although commonalities exist among all three analytical frameworks, the lens of critical pedagogy directly informed how structural and systemic improprieties impeded the teacher candidates' pursuit of postsecondary education. From implications of class injustices located at the macro and micro levels, new constructs of critical pedagogy emerged. These understandings—counter normative knowledge—focused on the tensions of language and class within the community and on the critical role of teacher education in supporting educators of second-language learners as well as poor and working-class students. Two narratives revealed how the injustices of inferior early schooling and poverty-related conditions continue to trouble the teacher candidates' pursuit of the American Dream—that is, a college education and middle-class status.

Positioned between the paradoxical ideologies of capitalism and democratic education, these teacher candidates' lives (and the HBCU) are dragged down by financial insecurities and, no doubt, will be encumbered for years to come. In short, capitalism heralds competition and an individual's pursuit based on merit, which always creates a hierarchy of winners and losers. Juxtaposed is the ideology of democracy, which applauds egalitarian (classless) rights and emphasizes education as the primary

mechanism for uplifting an ethnic or racial group. Yet, the people as well as institutions of low SES have less political power and resources to create change. Such political struggles over educational policy are so intense, in part, because education is the primary determinant of access to good jobs and higher income; education is the key to transitioning into middle-class standing and to allowing escape from intergenerational poverty (Weber, 2001). Although class matters in education, class and its horrific implications are rarely discussed within teacher training venues (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004). Without these conversations, working-class institutions perpetuate working-class students' lives.

For all participants in this study, it was class disparities—more than racial injustices—that perpetuated tensions and problems inside and outside the university. When confronted with the choices to feel victimized or to take control, they chose the latter. Acts of agency and resistance developed through their convictions and conscientious work—making sacrifices and doing whatever the situation morally demanded to survive. Their creative, often resistant responses to schooling or oppression also assumed an individual character, or style, in the form of humor and comic relief for Joey, denial or positive-mindedness for Theodore, stern vigilance in caring about the less fortunate for Susan, staunch problem-solving persistence for Louis, and a quiet reserve to maintain one's strength for Klarissa and Constance, and denial or sacrifice for Destiny. Here, the intent is not to romanticize such responses of creativity and resistance. For these endeavors often were problematic, anxiety driven, and distracted from each preservice teacher's focus on achievement. Ultimately, acts of agency and increased self-

knowledge contributed to their understandings of the perils and victories in becoming a teacher.

By considering their enduring, situated, and at times endangered lives, I heard the Mexican American teacher candidates express their belief that although institutional and educational shortcomings persist, this university has not failed them. These preservice teachers respect both the ethos of the diverse community within this HBCU and the shared visions of working together for change. As their stories become heard and valued, a pride of place is emerging. For they believe these challenges and STU's tuition and loans for living expenses to be costly, but a wise investment: "Yep, I'm in debt—but I'm investing in m-y-s-e-l-f. I'll be worth it in the end!" chuckled Joey.

CHAPTER 6

BORDER CROSSERS AS TEACHERS IN THE BORDERLANDS

If teachers are not learning much from their students, it is probable that their students are not learning much from them.
J. Cummins

Framed within a context of social justice, this study opens conversations to challenge the limited information known about Latina/os attending HBCUs and the programs that prepare preservice teachers of Color. The term *border crossers* defines the uniqueness of the Mexican American teacher candidates at STU who live in contradictory realities of belonging and not belonging. *Borderlands* defines the HBCU as a site of repression and resistance in the margins of higher education and marks the convergence of cultural differences that serve institutionally to include or exclude. By focusing on the convergence of cultural differences, borderlands consciousness allows scholars to transcend a Black–White or race binary that might otherwise obscure the struggles of students of working-class backgrounds who seek an education and upward economic mobility.

In working-class students' lives, poverty and racism cannot be ignored. The portraits that emerge are of Mexican American men and women who chose STU, believing that relations with diverse populations would strengthen their preparation as teachers and later pursuits to create just and democratic schools. As their stories reveal, in the borderlands intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and abilities overlap and, at times, clash. Yet, these human borderlands also offer the potential of rich cross-cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical settings (Pugh et al., 2000).

This chapter begins by recapping the major sources of tensions, negative and positive, that prohibit or legitimize relationships at STU, as perceived by the preservice teachers. What surfaces in this analysis are insights with regard to the participants' deepening consciousness, perceptions of changes and transformations, and strategies for survival and resistance. The importance of context and situational uniqueness is revisited to illuminate the power of place. What follows is the discussion of how this study fills the previous absence of research about Latinos/as in higher education, specifically at HBCUs. Of special interest is the strength of combining four analytical frameworks and the impact of this study's findings on teacher education programs and HBCUs. These strengths lead to suggestions for rethinking practices and policies as well as suggestions for future research.

Threaded throughout this chapter are three overriding themes:

1. If anything is clear, it is that class and race shape the teacher candidates' place in the educational system as well as the character of the university.

2. Mexican American teacher candidates bring rich cultural legacies and cross-cultural perspectives. They remain, however, unaddressed within activities and curriculum at STU.

3. Despite the complexity of relations between education and sociopolitical cultures, the participants continue to believe their experiences at STU will support later teaching effectiveness in urban classrooms.

Conclusions

Tensions of Practice and Pedagogy

By assuming a holistic approach, this research opened inquiries to provide contextualization of the sociopolitical, pedagogical, and cultural phenomena of pursuing an education at STU. For these 7 teacher candidates, a university education offered possibilities of less burdened and constrained lives and greater empowerment, but also at times caused them tensions or conflicts not easily resolvable (Olnec, 2004). In some cases, the potentials of these Mexican American preservice teachers were not justly acknowledged or were ignored and silenced. In other cases, the teacher candidates embraced validating experiences that enhanced persistence through graduation. Where there is suppression and domination, there are also the tools to shift positions (resistance). Here, it is necessary to view teaching, learning, and resistance as socially constructed processes. It is essential also to understand that resistance may assume three types: (a) opposition to ideological tensions, (b) opposition to pedagogical tensions, or (c) both (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). While the Mexican American teacher candidates honed strategies for survival and resistance, such experiences additionally increased self-awareness and a collective sense of pride. What surfaced were the teacher candidates' beliefs in the value of Blacks and Browns coming together to build a sense of community at STU.

Subtractive schooling practices. More nuanced than expected were the teacher candidates' experiences of subtractive schooling. With time, however, pieces of stories were assembled as a collage of marginalization. Subtractive schooling, as explained by Valenzuela (1999), not only fails to affirm students' cultures, but also divests resources

from them by obliging them to participate in nonneutral relations. Stories told by the Mexican American teacher candidates recounted incidents of not being considered for scholarships and campus leadership opportunities; of the absence of Mexican or Chicano culture, history, and contemporary issues in the curriculum; and of being ignored or treated rudely at the registrar and financial aid offices.

As Susan explained, "If I were African American right now with my high grade point and my skills, I would have more opportunities." Although some antiracist scholars may disagree, this study affirms that even within a predominantly Black institution, racism is evidenced when faculty have low teacher expectations and textbooks and faculty mostly disregard other ethnic groups (Villenas, 1999). In these situations of hegemonic knowledge constructions, according to Banks (2001), institutions exercise power that benefits their own privileged hierarchies. One of the most telling examples of subtractive schooling (institutional racism and hegemonic knowledge) was recounted by Louis: "In my classes the others say ridiculous things about illegals...I get mad, but I keep quiet…They talk about slavery and civil rights, but they don't see we've had struggles too. We've worked like slaves."

This moment testifies to the problem that Louis sees with the ways diverse circumstances are differently interpreted, positioned, or practiced. Such micro level interactions between individual teachers and students generally reflect the macro level of power in the dominant group and broader society. In effect, most educators are not blatant racists, but by failing to question social inequalities, they become unwittingly engaged in coercive relations of power and consequently suppress students' cultural identities (Cummins, 1996; Ellsworth, 1999). "Feelings of being pushed out of the tribe

for being different" Anzaldua (1999, p. 60) explained, provoke the capacity to see how surface phenomena mask deeper realities of racism or resentment. "It is an acute awareness mediated by part of the psyche that does not speak" but hides feelings of not being psychologically accepted or physically safe (Anzaldua, 1999, p. 60). Just as Louis explained, "I get mad, but I keep quiet," when push came to shove, the teacher candidates felt no recourse but to exhibit a student identity rather than a cultural identity in order to "succeed" within the campus ethos. Similarly, hooks (1990) detailed silenced experiences that occurred to her while in graduate school and explained suppression is possibly due to the perception that silence will conclude when students, themselves, become persons of power.

Consciousness and sharpened perspectives. Ultimately, a large part of the preservice teachers' story as border crossers is the deepening awareness of realities that split identities and shape lives as well as cause them to discover the capacity to survive within borderlands and elsewhere (Darder et al., 2003). People caught within and between worlds unknowingly develop a survival sense, a type of psychic radar that causes a shift in perception. This *conscientization*, the act of making sense of something, causes the person to cross over, creating new awareness, new knowledge, and new strength. Because this is such a personal experience for each border crosser, there is no one Chicano/a or Latino/a experience (Anzaldua, 1999; Delgado-Bernal, 1999; Freire, 1968). Nevertheless, certain experiential tropes are shared among the students in this study.

This mestizo awareness is a hard-earned consciousness revealed differently in all 7 Mexican American teachers' accounts. Theirs were perceptions of being a member of

an athletic team but shunned by fellow players, of being a student in classes but feeling excluded from the curriculum or singled out as different, and of knowing they were due the same financial and scholarship information but ignored or denied the opportunities. One story is not worse or better than another, but of importance is the understanding that the notion of difference grows out of unequal power relations (Anzaldua, 2002; Elenes, 2003). By examining the Mexican American teacher candidates' narratives and the practices that prohibited or legitimized relations, distinct portraits emerged of agency, voice, and difference (Pinar et al., 2000).

Exhausting for Susan and Destiny were the contrasts in experiences between attending classes at STU and negotiations at the welfare office for food stamps and medical insurance. Knowing phone inquiries were useless, both regretted they had no choice but to miss classes in order to stand in line before the office opened at 8:00 a.m. and then wait another 3 hours, only to receive a piece of paper indicating that later an agent would call to set up the actual appointment. Believing they had no voice and no control of the situation, they wanted to scream. Yet, they knew any sign of disdain would result in a delay of paperwork and the loss of benefits for their children. Returning to campus offered them some reprieve but also required a psychic climb upwards from subjugation to active role of student.

The potentials of agency, voice, and difference are dependent on access to requisite tools such as literacy and dialogical exchanges. These pedagogical actions can be practical, consciousness raising, and transformative in that the experiences may lead persons to challenge and change oppressive social structures (Egbo, 2004; Freire, 1968). In the teacher education program at STU, the required autobiography serves as one tool

for the development of consciousness and social action. Primarily, the autobiography asks the preservice teacher to reflect on life experiences that shape his or her teaching philosophy. The following excerpt from Constance's autobiography reveals how, as a child, she felt caught in the web of racial borders, ostracized by both Hispanic and Anglo peers. Today, this awareness leads Constance to become a teacher to help children negotiate their own identities as they, too, embrace struggles.

> Coming from a diverse background allows me to relate to other students who may also be biracial. Speaking from experience, it can be difficult trying to identify who you are, not really knowing where you came from. As a[n] elementary student, I remember filling out informational forms. One of the questions always asked about race. I would always mark "other" because I am half Anglo and half Hispanic. Even though I recognized I am a combination of two races, I never emphasized it…I recall being called "cracker" by the Hispanic students and a "mutt" by the Anglo students. Having experiences like this, have prompted me to serve as a mentor to other bi-racial children.

After reading this essay, I wrote questions to push Constance to further ponder her own biracialism as well as contemplate the student and teacher she has become at STU. Constance's e-mail response shows a consciousness of change or transformation:

> Mrs. Davies you are so funny! I love getting suggestions from you. In answer to your question, I have not continued to feel that way in college. To elaborate, I have not felt confused about who I am, but rather I get a little offended because people sometimes assume just because I have tan skin I know Spanish. I hope this makes sense to you.

Later during a discussion, Constance explained to our class, "Being Hispanic is only a piece of me, I'm many other things." This type of dialogue and analysis in classrooms addresses the more fundamental issue of whose voice gets to be heard in determining what is best for students of Color (Delpit, 1995). Without question, through dialogical exchange, students learn from teachers and teachers learn from students. "Hence, the actual lived experiences cannot be ignored or relegated to the periphery in

the process of coming to know. They must be incorporated…to understand, and consider how they might be different" (Darder et al., 2003, p. 15).

Fueled by commitment to one's self and against interpretations that led to stigmas, like Constance, the teacher candidates negotiated multiple worlds, dependent on the political and structural contexts in which they found themselves (Choe, 1999; Cummins, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). With heightened self-awareness and sharpened perspectives that difference is a resource, they sought empowerment through agency and voice.

Survival, resistance, and persistence strategies. Despite tensions, 6 of the 7 teacher candidates chose to live at the crossroads by excelling academically. By acquiring excellence through knowledge, they became more aware, more deeply conscious of themselves and their surroundings, and in turn, cultivated a type of radar or psychic sense as a survival tactic. Also, for them to survive and thrive at the crossroads, they had to assume new visibility and activism as a participant (Anzaldua, 1999).

At Charter Day, a campus-wide convocation at STU, 6 of the 7 study participants were recognized as honor students, the top 10% in their respective classes. Additionally, Susan earned special commendation for maintaining a 4.0 GPA throughout her college career. Clearly, these teacher candidates built power through knowledge and used knowledge to create power (Cary, 2006; Foucault, 1995). Their presence generated power, lessened suppression of their individual identities, and strengthened connections to other relations in the institution. Through such engagements of acceptance and worth, individual and collective identities were validated. These validating experiences served as

additive schooling and powerful reasons for persistence (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Rendon, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999; Ybarra & Lopez, 2004).

For these teacher candidates, knowledge opened the locked places inside, teaching them first how to survive, and then how to soar, allowing their roots to grow and become anchored in the site (Anzaldua, 1990). To be viewed as a contributing member and to sense the possibility of achieving one's goals to become a teacher are two powerful explanations for what keeps these teacher candidates from being overcome by their life responsibilities and for what helps them fit in and persist within the HBCU environment (Sharp, 2004).

With more attention to retention and persistence factors, a pattern was noted in the data. The word *community* appeared repeatedly in the teacher candidates' transcribed narratives. For example, Constance said, "I like the strong sense of community here." Theodore spoke with pride about the support shared among classmates at STU. "I like how others feel connected in this community. It's the largest part of my life. After all, I want to teach in this community."

At the time of this study, all participants were either juniors or seniors, and their coursework was concentrated in the teacher education program. Thus, it is plausible their construct of community evolved within the small classes where all teacher candidates coteach and collaborate on projects. Hence, it is by acquiring knowledge and collaborating across differences that meaning accrues and empowerment occurs (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Weber, 2001), and additive schooling is especially about the maintenance of community (Valenzuela, 1999). Most likely, what unites the community

of teacher candidates is not the skin color or the language spoken, but ideals shared by like-minded people who can offer forms of support and validation.

As Leistsyna and Woodrum (1996) wrote, "In becoming aware of both the positions they inhabit and the locations from which they speak, students are better able to take responsibility for their beliefs and actions" (p. 7). Such is the case with Susan, who remarked, "After coming on this campus, it's made a big impact on how I'm going to teach…To be here with these friends is a gift, an honor."

Tensions of Place

Although the teacher candidates spoke of the community at STU, part of explaining one's education at a HBCU is incorporating repudiated knowledge, predicated in the politics of repression and marginalization (Pinar et al., 2000). For most HBCU students, regardless of their race, the Black college campus itself is a place besieged by externally placed tensions. Students are often acutely aware of the general public's ignorance or stereotyping concerning minority-serving institutions. For these teacher education candidates, the tensions were exacerbated by their own status of outsider within a marginalized community. As anticipated, all of the Mexican American preservice teachers told stories of being questioned about their choice to attend STU. Constance said, "A lot of family asks me how it feels to go to a Black school. Even people off the street ask me." Laughingly, Joey commented, "My friends were really surprised for me to go here…I knew I would get a degree. It's the same size paper [diploma] they have."

Through critical pedagogy, attention has increased understanding of how situational uniqueness shapes the activities and shapes the students' involvement and

interpretations of the experiences (Greene, 1996; Haymes, 2003; hooks, 1990; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Pinar et al., 2000; St. Pierre, 2000). Thus, constructs of *pedagogy of place* and *power of place* helped to contextualize participants' stories against the institutional backdrop: "Each needed to be heard while the other was being analyzed...for one advances the understanding of the other" (Stake, 2006, p. x).

In considering pride of place, which declares an attachment of importance to a site, Joey worried that STU's constituents do not demonstrate the school spirit and pride so vital for status, institutional verve, and growth. Hence, having previously gained success in rousing pride among his athletic team members, Joey suggested, "We need to all wear the tee-shirts, the school colors. …We should show others we belong here, that we care." In effect, social capital is energized through such exchange networks of trust and solidarity among persons wishing to attain goals that cannot be individually attained (Freeman, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). Such negotiations of identities hold significance because STU occupies a section of the inner city, not unlike the urban setting of numerous U.S. schools and small colleges. Subsequently, the need to create new meanings and pride in urban school identity calls for increased attention at STU to better serve those it is supposed to serve: the students and community.

In considering the power of place, which includes both geographic and psychological terrains, STU served as a site of resistance and vitality for these teacher candidates. Within this site arises a community-building discourse in which their presence does not detract from the integrity of the HBCU, but rather their contributions increasingly are being noticed and endorsed. In turn, as they reflected on the value of a college education and their experiences at STU, their comments echoed Klarissa's

summation, “If I had all to do again, I would choose STU.” As Constance said, “I would come to this same college and get more involved.”

Tensions of Change and Class

Changes and transformations. A key legacy arising from this study is the connections drawn by moving back and forth between the psychosocial notions of selves and CRT, borderlands consciousness, and critical pedagogy. The analytical framework of three selves helped to illuminate changes and transformations as perceived and experienced by the Mexican American teacher candidates. Rooted in childhood, the enduring self links the past to the present, allowing us to understand ways in which beliefs and practices are constructed through our cultural communities. Whereas the situated self copes with conflicts and changes in the present, the endangered self confronts situational threats that undermine one’s enduring self (Spindler & Hammond, 2000).

Stories shared by the Mexican American men and women revealed enduring values rooted in childhood that sustain them, like the importance of family and education and a strong orientation toward work. When our discussion centered on cultural traditions, Destiny told of the soup recipe handed down for generations that she was rushing home to make for her grandfather’s annual visit from Mexico. Attention to family traditions made Susan laugh, because she can never avoid the inevitable expectations of her grandmother. “If a [Mexican] grandma makes tamales, you’re expected to know how to make tamales. I say, I’m not putting my hand into a hog! ...But I will, I will learn to make tamales. *I will*!”

From these enduring qualities and beliefs are built the foundations for decisions to teach, pursue social justice, and give back to the community. The teacher candidates' opinions varied, however, as to whether or not they felt the urgency to promote all things Mexican. While Joey enjoyed such opportunities, Constance remarked, "I am not the poster child for Spanish," which meant she did not like professors' demeaning or patronizing attitudes that called on her to translate or interpret a Spanish icon. Yet, all of the teacher candidates were concerned about tensions of language in the urban schools. All expressed concerns about transitioning from the college classroom, where the ideals of bilingualism are valued, to the tensions of language differences in the public schools.

Each teacher candidate's situated self is the cornerstone of this research. Learning to teach is a time of transformation and formation. Each preservice teacher's state of being and becoming represents the strengthening or the shifting of values, beliefs, and practices as a result of new knowledge and new contexts. Anzaldua (1999) and others (Choe, 1999; Elenes, 2003; Schmitz et al, 2004; Yosso, 2006) also have addressed the impact of context and counterstories on the transformative state of borderlands consciousness. Anzaldua (1999) wrote that transformation and insight on a personal level alters the larger context: "Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society" (p. 109). Hence, for all of us, the future depends on skills to straddle two or more cultural situations, thereby, creating new consciousness and changes in ways reality is perceived. This construct of transformation comes to light when juxtaposed between the situated self and the enduring or endangered selves.

As a conceptual tool, the situated self reveals not only how one develops within a particular context, but also how the person transforms the given contexts and activities. For example, unfair relations prompted Susan to take actions in defense of the marginalized student: "I'm a mom figure. I feel so strongly about the inequalities I see." The following anecdotes illuminate the different ways Susan positioned herself to transform relations at STU. Sometimes she admonished the aggressor, and at other times she provided classmates with ammunition:

> When I see someone talking down to a student, I get mad. And I just let that person know it's not right to have that attitude. …Every time I get in line I'm on guard. I don't understand why the registrars can't get it right. I tell students, "Keep up the paperwork. Don't expect anyone to help you. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't expect it to be fair."

These stories are just a few examples of how alliances at STU were forged to break down barriers and to take on struggles for social change.

Additionally, for Destiny, Louis, and Theodore the element of conflict escalated between their enduring self (aspiring to become a teacher) and their situated self (positioned at an academic crossroads to either pass the THEA or not pursue teacher certification). Highly exasperated, Destiny recounted, "I've been taking the THEA test (five times) and I can't pass it! ...What did I make, an A or B in college algebra? ...This tutoring is not working for me!" Not having passed the math section by time of graduation, Louis found no recourse but to graduate noncertification. Only after intense effort, Theodore passed all three parts, proceeded to graduation, acquired certification, and now teaches in an inner-city high school.

The endangered self confronts situational threats that in turn undermine one's enduring self. Such was the case with Louis. He had proved to be an astute preservice

teacher with middle and high school special education students, whom others had demoralized and shunned. His talent lies in talking one-on-one with teens to redirect their anger. His charisma and quick actions often kept his high school students from being expelled or sent to detention. Yet, no matter how deeply Louis wanted to become a certified teacher, the dire circumstances of family commitments and financial needs forced Louis to graduate without fulfilling requirements for teacher certification. Now, the promise of a higher salary as a grocery store manager looms over his goal to pursue alternative teacher certification. His story reveals how one's enduring values of family and education can become conflicted—at odds between one's dreams and the realities of survival.

At different times, all 7 teacher candidates faced endangerment from spiraling problems invoked by socioeconomic perils. Susan and Destiny in particular grew psychologically and physically endangered by the stress of humiliations endured at the welfare office, seeking food stamps while juggling parenting and university responsibilities, along with health problems exacerbated by these worries. With remorse and anger, Susan lamented, "I mark each day on the calendar until my graduation—that will end my nightmare on welfare."

By using Spindler's (2006) tools to analyze change and transformations in the teacher candidates' narratives, two conclusions became apparent:

1. Their situated lives at STU have strengthened their enduring selves, for they believe experiences at this HBCU have helped them build character and will support later teaching effectiveness.

2. Their situated lives at times were (and are) endangered lives, **f**or the perils of poverty and working class barriers have spawned multiple obstacles.

Class disparities. Social class is a hierarchical form of power (Fuller, 1999), but few in the academy have sufficient understandings and tolerance with complexities of poverty and its implications in education (Knapp & Wooverton, 2004). The disparity between what most in the academy do not know and what they need to know is problematic. In contrast, the teacher candidates in this study have working-class sensibilities, in both degree of extent and quantity that shaped who they are and how they view and can interact with students in public schools. All told, the borders intersecting socioeconomic class with which these 7 teacher candidates struggled daily were more troublesome than the borders splitting race, language, or other dimensions.

Similar to other first-generation, working-class students, these teacher candidates not only have incurred college debts but also have assumed the financial woes of their parents. Yes, they have gained sophistication from dealing with the system and greater society, but such lessons were hard won and some demanded a psychological or physical toll. Although these teacher candidates believe a college degree holds the hope of a more secure financial future, most likely it will be years before an end to the vicious cycle of poverty. In contrast, few middle-class educators have endured the complexities of these problems and thus remain naïve or inadequate to the task of helping children of families who live below or right above the poverty line.

Rather than regard as unique the situations of these men and women in this study, we must view their circumstances as vestiges of broader, more complex societal problems. Tragically, our society allows 1 in 4 U.S. children to live in poverty. These

figures increase dramatically if we add the working poor, who are all those families who live just above the poverty line. Consequently, we need teachers who have understandings of "both the world the child lives in and the world the child can live in" (Fuller, 1999, p. 253). Such teachers can serve as the source of strength and assume a primary role in problem solving and taking actions to help resist and overcome injustices.

Although the need is established, there is a dearth of literature about the far-reaching impact of class on teachers and, specifically, about how economic conditions mediate student learning in teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004). This absence is the unsaid, the elephant in the academy. Consequently, it seems that educators are generally socialized to ignore social class, especially their own (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004). This is not a social void where race is more important than class. Rather, the inseparability of race, class, and gender still asserts more attention on race and less on activism to confront class struggles (Darder & Torres, 2003; Valdivia, 2005). Indeed, this deafening silence is problematic—but even worse in teacher education programs is the positioning of poor children as deficit or pathologic or deviant (Elenes, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005). According to Ladson-Billings (2005), many teacher education programs actually propagate these stereotypes, which further victimize children of Color and poverty:

> The fear of the Other…permeates and is cultivated by teacher education. It is coupled with constant reminders of the limited abilities and need to dilute the curriculum and to compromise learning for students defined as the Other (p. 19).

There is strong evidence to support Ladson-Billings and other scholars' assertions that classrooms, schools, and universities are politicized spaces that generally, uncritically serve and reproduce the dominant social order in society (Anyon, 1997; Apple, 1997;

Finn, 1999; Freire, 1970; Kozol, 1992; McKenna, 2003). "Schools actually work against the class interests of those students who are most politically and economically vulnerable within society" (Darder et al., 2003, p. 11). Such truisms were revealed in the participants' stories of their earlier inferior schooling experiences, which continue to haunt and obstruct these teacher candidates' academic pursuits. Also perplexing were the stories of STU professors who lowered standards and accepted mediocre work, which assuredly will keep the classmates more politically and economically vulnerable in society. Ironically, such practices implicate institutional racism directed onto students, while at the same time the university's mission rails against such oppression.

In spite of shortcomings, the teacher candidates in this study believed their experiences and education at STU will support their later teaching effectiveness in urban classrooms. As teacher candidates in the borderlands, these Mexican American women and men have negotiated multiple worlds, gaining the knowledge and competence critical for teaching children in our society.

Strengths, Contributions, and Implications

The strengths of this research study began with an in-depth review of literature, which in turn helped to guide the development of the methodology, data collection, and the strong alignment between the theoretical frameworks and data analysis. To sufficiently explore the research question, the teacher candidates' perspectives and experiences were interrogated through the lenses of CRT, borderlands consciousness, and critical pedagogy and through the lens of enduring, situated, and endangered selves. Through analysis, understandings emerged that not only will advance present scholarship,

but also are key connections for enhancement in the wider context of teacher education programs, HBCUs, and universities.

After taking inventory, the strengths of the study also mark the struggles. Always in the foreground were the concerns not to reinforce stereotypes and to avoid simplistic representations of race, class, age, abilities, and gender. There was the struggle not to fall prey to engaging in political analyses of class and race through accusations of economic determinism and reductionism. There was the struggle not to spread too thin this project across the various theoretical constructs. In all, the goal was to provide a cursory overview of the Mexican American teacher candidates' participation and persistence at one HBCU and from this to affirm their significance within the STU community. Understanding these aspects paints a clearer picture of the campus climate that Latino/as experience and the types of support Mexican American students need in a multiracial university.

Filling Voids in the Literature: Drawing Connections

Used in tandem, CRT, borderlands consciousness, critical pedagogy, and the notion of changing and transformative selves illuminated in a holistic way the untold stories of the 7 Mexican American teacher candidates at a HBCU. While overlapping in theory, each analytic tool helped to contextualize the research and highlight otherwise unseen complexities and variant aspects. According to which dimension is emphasized, questions and arguments become fashioned differently. Still, this summary does not serve justice to the many critical theorists and scholars who guided this investigation. Yet, the more prominent theories are highlighted to draw connections between constructs and findings.

Through CRT and analysis this study found a language of possibility to understand change and promote transformations (Anzaldua, 1987, 1999; Cummins, 1996; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992; hooks, 2000, 2003a; Knapp & Woolverton, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2004, 2005; McKenna, 2003; McLaren, 1999, 2003; Tate, 1997, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas et al., 1999). First, CRT was used as an oppositional discourse, drawing on the participants' experiential knowledge to examine race relations, institutional racism, and notions of difference, which grow out of unequal power relations and the consequences of oppressions (Anzaldua, 1999; Elenes, 2003; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Tate, 1997). Borderlands consciousness focused on the border mestiza/o identities and the practices of power that led to split subjectivities and counterdiscourses (Anzaldua, 1999, 2001; Elenes, 2003; McKenna, 2003; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2004; Villenas et al., 1999; Yosso, 2006). Meanwhile, the critical pedagogy lens was used to foreground the tensions of class, language, and culture within structures and systems and the reconceptualizations of curriculum and pedagogy. In addition to highlighting these tensions, critical pedagogy's politicism also helped the study participants to engage in dialogue with the objective to produce their own ideas and develop their own transformative practices (Giroux, 1992; Greene, 1996; Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996; McLaren, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999). Subsequently, Spindler's (2006) framework of enduring, situated, and endangered selves was used to analyze the teacher candidates' notions of change and transformation. The uniqueness of combining the four analytical frameworks in this study works to remap and expand academic topography.

To set this study apart from other research endeavors, the study's context within one HBCU (as fully defined in Appendix D) was interwoven throughout the text and played a role in the teacher candidates' perceptions and interpretations of experiences. Another plus was the dynamic and reciprocal relationship that occurred between research and practice. At first the Mexican American participants were cautious, but over time they sent e-mails, stopped by my office to offer ideas and support, and purposefully increased discussions of issues of pride or concern integral to this research question or the campus community. My insider/outsider status provided closeness and distance, allowing time and space for us to acquire deeper understandings. The dynamic results of this inquiry and ensuing relationships have informed and will continue to advance practices in teacher preparation and in subsequent research.

Foremost, it is important to recognize that only limited studies have been conducted with preservice teachers at HBCUs. This state of affairs is particularly troublesome, because more than 50% of all African American teachers in U.S. schools graduated from HBCUs. Scholars such as Banks (2001), Bennett (2004), Gay (2004), hooks (1990), King (2001), Hilliard (2000), and Ladson-Billings (2003) have written about teachers who graduated from HBCUs, but only limited research has been conducted to support their assessments. Beyond society's puzzlement or questions regarding the staying power of HBCUs, the absence of systemic research at HBCUs propagates a deficit image within the academy and seriously shortchanges the viability and future of historically Black institutions. What is more, if quality research is not published for institutional self-interrogation and for academy scrutiny, this state of

silence and obscurity further casts the Mexican American students as double outsiders: They will continue to be the Others in the outer borderlands called the HBCU.

Perhaps of greatest significance is the realization that this study stands alone in offering vital information about the experiences, perceptions, and preparation of Mexican American teacher candidates in the HBCU. Although many research articles in journals and books have focused on the dismal retention and low graduation rates of Latino/as in public higher education, few studies have described places where these college students are successful. As universities and colleges struggle to find ways to retain these students and HBCUs struggle to attract a large enough student base for economic viability, studies that examine the successes and experiences of Latino/as at HBCUs will become increasingly important. Even though one o article was found dealing with recruitment of Hispanic nursing students at a HBCU in Louisana, no studies were found that examined teacher education students or Latino/a students' experiences at HBCUs. Moreover, no literature contextualized their experiences through CRT and borderlands consciousness.

The HBCU setting is somewhat different; nevertheless, this research study affirms the prior studies of Hurtado and Kaminimura (2003), Jones and Castellanos (2003), Nora (2003), and Rendon (2003), which focused on key aspects that influenced Latino/a students' persistence in higher education. Just as demonstrated in those scholars' works, this study confirms the significance of a sense of belonging through academic achievement and peer support networks. The sense of community stems from college students' perceptions both of limited ethnic or racial conflicts and of perceptions that the educational climate is tolerant of Latino/a students' presence on campus. Such data reinforce Valenzuela's (1999) findings that additive schooling is especially about the

maintenance of community and Ybarra and Lopez's (2004) claim that additive schooling is about the school not trying to change the students or not requiring that they disassociate from their families. Additive schooling provides validating experiences where like-minded people offer support and validation and share similar values and goals (Rendon, 2003; Villalpando, 2003).

Nora (2003) found that the determinant most influencing Hispanic students' retention, besides finances, is their perception of their academic performance in college, particularly during the 1st year. Nora also found the converse: When compared to most nonminority students who are able to "shake off" a bad semester or an entire year, the perception of inadequate intellectual prowess appears 3 times more devastating for Hispanic college students. "Their sense of belonging in college and their perceptions of possessing academic capital (the ability to earn a college degree) is seriously questioned whenever they experience a lower than expected academic performance" (Nora, p. 61). On the other hand, findings in this research study suggest that when Hispanic college students believe their educational needs are satisfied and that they have encountered few micro-aggressions, they most likely push themselves toward academic excellence and, if time permits, are more willing to participate in extracurricular activities.

Of note, the women and men in this study, when asked, were not interested in organizing a Hispanic sorority, Hispanic student association, or Catholic student group on campus, because they preferred to participate in organizations based on their own academic, athletic, or curricular interests. Whether this information affirms or refutes other scholars' findings is not clear and deserves further thought. The reason may be that 4 of the 7 were older students firmly focused on career and family responsibilities. From

my queries, they responded that ethnic-focused groups might undermine the power of community. To them, community means honoring Blackness through a multiplicity of identities, not a monoculture. Just as there is not one but many Chicano/Latina stories, they perceived there is just not one story of the HBCU.

While the STU institutional culture appears to provide an "ethos of hope" (Sharp, 2004, p. 117), there also is a pervasive sense of fate or tired discouragement over the lack of finances and resources among students and within the university. It is as if the teacher candidates know there is a richer world beyond the campus and their own lives, but since they have never experienced such richness, they are resigned to a life of scarcity and making do. When asked the difference between a middle-class teacher and a working-class teacher, their answers varied. Destiny responded, "A middle-class teacher teaches because she wants to, but a working-class teacher has no choice." Klarissa believes the working-class teacher is a better role model for children, because she or he is more creative, using only what materials are available, as opposed to middle-class teachers who are more apt to spend money to solve problems and to meet needs.

"It is tempting for universities to blame students' dropout on their failure to prepare themselves for, or commit themselves to, their studies" (Bowl, 2003, p. 157). Rather than lack of commitment or preparation, it is not surprising to learn that lack of financial resources has been identified as the prominent factor (or one of the most common factors) that impedes the success of Latina/or college students and causes them to drop out (Jones & Castellanos, 2003; Nora, 2003). Still, there are few or no studies in the literature that illuminate how economic conditions mediate the preparation of teachers

and, specifically, teachers of working-class backgrounds (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Thus, findings from this study begin to fill the void.

Findings from this study substantiate how the Mexican American teacher candidates embraced challenges of intergenerational poverty and class-related injustices that greatly impacted educational outcomes. Even though all study participants received financial aid assistance (grants and loans), to get by it was necessary for them to maintain part-time employment, which in turn, robbed them of quality health and time (Bloom, 2005; Bowl, 2003). This study demonstrates how class conditions shaped the teacher candidates' place in the educational system, their opportunities for employment, and their future to attain middle-class standing (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004; Weber, 2002). Moreover, this study reveals how these Mexican American teacher candidates "were not created by teacher education" but rather came with the experiences and understandings to be prepared to teach in urban schools (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 16).

Strengths of Study to Rethink Research and Practices

Such a study as this bears the capacity to break through institutional stagnation and people's comfort zones to inspire new thoughts (Bartolome, 1996; Greene, 1996). Nonetheless, as Pizarro (1999) wrote, "We must understand that engagement in social justice research makes us suspect in our institution, but that we have little choice other than to challenge the system and policies that call our work into question" (p. 75). The breakthrough strategies, therefore, in this section capitalize on the benefits (a) of viewing border crossers and the HBCU as a strength; (b) of exploring analogous constructs in the literature that hold promise; (c) of designing a research-based curriculum for professors, teachers, and preservice teachers that humanely develops understandings of class-related

educational injustices; and (d) of building relations within the institution and community beyond, to change the status quo and to increase assistance and support for future teacher candidates.

View border crossers and HBCUs as a strength. Rather than focusing on border crossers and borderlands as deficient or as a deficit, this study illuminates the strengths and rich resources of the Mexican American preservice teachers as well as the HBCU. Through this study they were moved from the margins (exclusion) to the center (inclusion). By illuminating the teacher candidates' own stories, we learned of rich cultural legacies and cross-cultural perspectives. Their perspectives and actions in variant ways enhanced and transformed relations, activities, and curriculum at STU. Yet, the needs and heritage of the Mexican American teacher candidates remain underserved by the institution via aggressions or denials in policies, practices, and curriculum. In spite of shortcomings, they believe this HBCU offers a borders-space where Blacks and Browns are forging alliances against racial and economic tensions propagated by the dominant society. This institution provides an invitation of community where difference becomes an asset not a threat.

By widening the landscape of ideas, this study builds on present research and also offers a prototype for future scholarship and for practices in teacher education programs within and beyond HBCUs. Of particular merit are the stories of validating experiences and the sense of community, which proved so crucial for the Mexican American teacher candidates' persistence at STU. Asked to interpret their commitment to STU, the study participants recounted the "feeling of community here at STU." These findings speak to the essentials and necessities of creating spaces for students to network, to share and

discuss issues, and to affirm their voices. Specifically, an environment in which teacher candidates do not have to subvert feelings or explain to others that oppressive discrimination and financial hardships are daily issues in their lives, because the Others within the group already understand (Pizarro, 1998).

Explore analogous constructs. Intriguing is the overlapping or analogous theoretical constructs that cropped up in the literature. These ideas, expressed in different ways by different scholars, hold merit for deeper investigations. Worthy of further exploration are the similar concepts of validating experiences and of transformative experiences.

Closely related to the construct of *validating experiences* are the constructs of *social capital* and *cultural congruity.* Whereas social capital is the exchange-networks of trust and solidarity among students (Freeman, 2005; Valuenzuela, 1999), cultural congruity denotes the "cultural fit or match between one's internal values and those of the university environment" (Gloria & Castellanos, 2005, pp. 80–81). The degree of social capital or cultural congruity depends on whether students feel they belong in the dominant sociocultural system. In turn, to be viewed as a contributing member and to sense the possibility of achieving one's goals are affirmations of cultural praxis (Freire, 1968) and additive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999). All of these overlapping constructs reiterate the need to provide opportunities and support for students to become stakeholders in the community-building discourse.

Therefore, the university must now take a leadership role to support culturally validating experiences and alliances among African Americans, Latina/os, and Others. To do so, the various parties must be invited to the table where their voices are heard and

honored. Also evident is the call for faculty to examine their own cultural biases as well as reevaluate their curriculum and pedagogical methods to further infuse diversity, collaborative efforts, and academic rigor. These actions include establishing educational foundations for a more profound understanding of Latino/a issues in Texas and worldwide. Such actions must extend beyond individual endeavors to offer support for interdisciplinary campus-wide faculty development.

Our professors and students need opportunities to embrace and discuss the arts, popular culture, and updated curriculum via cultural songs, movies, media, and other forms of artistic expression (Anzaldua, 1999; Cortes, 2004; Eisner, 1991; Franquiz, 2001; Giroux, 1992; Greene, 1996; Pinar et al., 2000; Yosso, 2006). The intent is to afford credibility to cultural and class differences. The arts and popular culture can serve as countertext to explore, for example, how conflict can be contested in nonviolent ways or to explore how the mass media misrepresent race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class subjectivities. For example, Cary and Reifel (2005) explored cinematic portraits of teachers and students to contemplate how such images of the "good" teacher or "good" student penetrate our consciousness. We further can help college students understand productive resistance to power through discussions of First Amendment rights of speech and peaceful assembly and through investigations of advocacy rights of special needs children. We can encourage our students (i.e., teacher candidates) to work on assignments with bilingual journals and newspapers to report on events along the Texas border and to view issues from multiple perspectives. Through the utilization of children's literature and newspaper articles, we can nourish understanding about the ramifications of international issues such as the National Free Trade Agreement (Bartolome &

Balderrama, 2001; Elenes, 2003; McKenna, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999). Best of all, enlightenment and transformation can occur when teacher candidates serve in community schools as mentors for second-language learners and possibly as advocates for their families.

Such transformations can be tracked and better understood via the tools of borderlands consciousness and Spindler's (2006) framework of psychosocial selves. These analogous tools are indeed useful for examining the self as a transformative state. This position of *transformative consciousness* advocates individual responsibility and action, leading to the reconstruction of personal and social experiences (Gay, 2004). Similarly, the analytical tool of *curriculum spaces* focuses on ways of being and how we know what we know and, specifically, how we know Others (Cary, 2006). This relationship between evolving thought, values, and self—one's positionality of knowing—does not always result in transformative, positive changes (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). By further exploring transformation with these analytical tools, we can better explain the situations teacher candidates and of people all over the globe—who as border crossers find themselves in an ever-changing state of belonging and not belonging, of comfort and distance (Anzaldua, 1987, 1999, 2002; Banks, 2004; Cary, 2006; Choe, 1999; Giroux, 1992; Villenas, 1996, 2000).

Intriguingly, in this study both analytic tools also helped to illuminate the rich enduring qualities of HBCUs and how beliefs and practices are constructed through cultural communities. Both tools helped to demonstrate how this HBCU, situated within the borders of higher education, is endangered by both inside and outside forces. Conflicts arise between the attempt to sustain Blackness in the Black College and the

urgent need to increase enrollment and widen financial support through recruitment and acceptance of students from diverse backgrounds. Consequently, the role of borderlands consciousness and of this research study was not simply to understand the injustices but to fashion arguments that may change existing beliefs and practices.

Design curriculum to understand class and race injustices. Of urgent importance is the call for the academy to come together to fashion a curriculum for teacher education candidates to clearly understand how schooling practices perpetuate, and are implicated in, class-related injustices. Although I widely searched the literature, I found few articles and books to help teacher candidates contemplate and arbitrate economic circumstances that shape their views and teaching practices as well as shape the lives of the children they will teach. Consequently, our academy of teacher educators must look to other disciplines that already use case studies and internships to convey difficult, potentially volatile information in order to enhance preservice teachers' learning about critical economic, social, and political issues. It was from Weber (2001) and Weber and Dillaway (2002), scholars in women's studies and sociology, that I found a holistic framework to understand both the processes and ideologies that obscure class and the antagonisms arising from the ideologies of capitalism and democratic education. Through this type of discourse and pedagogy, we can better support working-class teacher candidates as they face enormous obstacles to complete a degree and prepare to teach, especially when considering the weaknesses from inferior schooling and the high costs of education.

Consequently, the STU teacher education program must confront the reality that it is shortchanging the preparation of all teacher candidates by not offering bilingual training and certification, or at the minimum, not offering a substantial component in

ESL training. From the participants' stories, it is also vital for the STU teacher education program to offer elective-credit courses to help preservice teachers remediate writing and math inadequacies. The present program expectation that teacher candidates should procure tutorial assistance outside of course requirements is unrealistic and a disservice.

Furthermore, it is important to recap how the teacher candidates in this study did not react to small racist incidents at STU, which they encountered daily. The small injustices were suppressed or overlooked when possible, if only because attending to subtle discrimination would not help the preservice teachers attain their academic and career goals (Feagin & McKinney, 2004). Only Susan openly challenged staff, professors, and fellow students who were rude, insensitive, or exclusionary to other STU students. It seems at STU the macro and micro issues of diversity and discrimination are deeply rooted in an advantaged group position that continues to reinforce them (Villalpando, 2003). Therefore, it is recommended that necessary steps at STU be taken to identify macro and micro aggressions and put into place a clear, firm policy to deal with oppressive incidents.

> When racism is perpetuated, it can do so only because we continue to create and re-create it in our social life, continue to verify it, and thus continue to need a social vocabulary that will allow us to make sense, not of what our ancestors did then, but of what we choose to do now (Fields, as cited in Omni & Winant, 2005, p. 4).

The STU community and other like institutions must realize that race-neutral and assimilation practices actually operate to the disadvantage of students of Color in schools, universities, and the wider society (Frankenberg, 1993; Gutierrez, 2004; Pinar et al., 2000). Consequently, the overwhelming majority of youth of Color see no relationship between education and their daily lives in the community and the problems of today's

world that affect them so intensely. STU therefore can take the lead, by honoring the significance of its legacy but also by building a community discourse through the funds of knowledge approach (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004). Inherent in this approach is the ethical obligation of the institution to draw on the rich resources and perspectives of the students it openly recruits and accepts while providing racially and ethnically relevant services and curriculum to all of the students at STU. By building mutual coalitions between Mexican American and African American students, what happens at STU can influence what happens throughout the nation.

Build relations to increase assistance and support. Faced with the imminent decision whether as an institution to become more obscure and extinct, or to positively embrace the brisk increase of Hispanic U.S. populations, the HBCUs have little choice but to rise to build and nourish education within multiethnic communities. Alarmingly, among the market share of college-eligible students, the pool is shrinking for all African American and Hispanic youth, due to the high dropout rates in high school and students' failure to meet academic credentials to clear admission to college (Bennett, 2004). Simultaneously, at STU questions and concerns are heard about financial costs and attitude adjustments. Such long-established issues loom unresolved like the lack of representation of diverse members on committees, on the board of trustees, and in leadership positions; the absence of signage, publications, and recruitment materials in both Spanish and English; the hiring of more Latino/a staff and faculty; the overall campus climate; and the number and quality of community outreach programs (MacDonald, 2004; Ybarra & Lopez, 2004).

Surveying the research and literature clarified for me that efforts of universities and teacher education programs to recruit and retain Mexican American college students must begin much earlier, as early as the elementary years, in order to assure prospective students that they have the academic preparation to advance after high school (Pizarro, 2005; Valdes, 1996). The present lack of student readiness and preparation for higher education calls for coalitions to be built between the university and communities. Such relationships begin by making available university facilities for community use. Most importantly, since 50% or more Hispanic students do not continue their education beyond junior college, it is essential that HBCUS capitalize on helping students to make the transition to a 4-year college. Obviously, the best recruitment technique is satisfied customers. Hence, money should be budgeted to support Mexican American teacher candidates' recruitment and mentorship endeavors. These suggestions are all commendable, but the bottom line remains—working-class preservice teachers urgently need increased financial assistance to persist through graduation and beyond. Moreover, promised programs and assistance must follow through with mutual respect as demonstrated by university leaders.

At STU as well as at other large and small universities and colleges, the admissions, financial aid, and registrar's offices represent an important, although not exclusive, university interface, not only with the freshman and transfer students, but also with the outside community (Hernandez & Jacobs, 2004). These frontline offices are the initial borderlands where college students and the community are greatly helped, or not helped, to navigate the systems. This maze seems convoluted, problematic, or especially time consuming to first-generation and working-class students. Yet, such problems could

be more easily resolved if these offices provided ambassadors, committed to welcoming and mentoring new, transfer, and nontraditional college students.

Mentorship has been identified by college-choice theorists as a critical factor to assure college persistence (Freeman, 2005; Rendon, 2003). Besides financial assistance, in order to persist through graduation most college students seek trustful relations with a peer group or a faculty mentor. Although this research study did not specifically address peer mentoring activities or the importance of frequent contact and interaction with faculty, it stands to reason that such relations should be developed for Mexican American teachers candidates at STU. This conclusion is based on the participants' respect for "the sense of community at STU" and expressed appreciation for the small class sizes of 8–12 students and helpful relationships built via the teacher education program at STU. In recognizing the importance of purposeful and trustful relations, it is paramount that teacher education programs continue to organize and support cohort group experiences. We know these experiences increase preservice teachers' knowledge and persistence, but there is little research evidence about whether or how these gains are sustained over time (Hollins & Guzman, 2005).

Suggestions for Future Research

Quite possibly this research has evoked as many new questions as answers. Most importantly, how will this study influence the educational practices produced and performed in my classroom and others' classrooms at STU? "Research about and within social and cultural difference—and we researchers ourselves—are always unfinished and incomplete…what we researchers are knowing, forgetting, and finding from a different place—are always in the re-making" (Ellsworth, 1999, p. 34).

While this study challenges the traditional knowledge base that has silenced or rendered invisible the many stories of students, particularly Hispanic students, at HBCUs, one wonders: What are the African American and White teacher candidates' stories? How do African Americans view themselves as border crossers in Texas? To pursue this line of inquiry, how can Spindler's (2006) psychosocial notion of selves serve to understand Others, such as the Asian Americans and American Indians at predominantly Anglo universities?

As confirmed in this study, the intersections of class, race, gender, age, and abilities are dimensions that cannot be fully separated. Clearly, there is the need for further, in-depth investigations into how class disparities influence the preparation of teachers at the macro (institutional) and micro (individual) levels. What pedagogy enhances or deters working-class students' matriculation? What are the stories of preservice teachers from low-SES backgrounds at other universities? We must begin to close the gap in understanding how class injustices influence training and teaching practices.

In a central way, this research contributes to the need to recruit and capitalize on the attributes of a more diverse teaching force and the need to prepare teachers for the cultural diversity that they will encounter in U.S. public schools. Although attention was given to how participants' knowledge and perceptions were influenced by pedagogy and practices at STU, a longitudinal study could focus better on residual effects of these experiences over time. It is important to keep track of these participants and return after 10 years from this original study to provide additional portraits of these Mexican

American teachers in their later lives. Such a study could examine how their enduring selves have fared and continue to influence their teaching identities.

Further research should be undertaken to distinguish the effects of the training program versus effects attributable to individuals and context (place). Such studies would explain the conditions under which various effects and teaching behaviors occur and why (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). These endeavors should more closely consider the following: How do faculty interact with border crossers to strengthen pedagogy and relations (with particular focus on the efficacy of instruction)? What specific kinds of coursework and preparation matter in enhancing training and support of border crossers? Given that much of the coursework of prospective teachers is taken outside of education departments, it is important for researchers to broaden the scope of research to include the other coursework and program areas (Zeichner & Conklin).

In summary, the aforementioned are just some of the ways in which this study shapes new questions and imaginings to rethink the vast array of borders, where learning, teaching, and research take place. If we are effectively to address the challenging needs of higher education and the preparation of public school teachers, this study informs ways to explore new research and ways to create college experiences for Latina/os that capitalize on their cultural resources and mestiza consciousness sensibility (Villenas, 1996, 2000). Additionally, the hope of this study is to offer portraits of students and education at HBCUs that replace mainstream deficit notions with images of difference as an asset, strength, and resource.

Closing Thoughts

Just as chapter 1 began, chapter 6 closes with the significance of Louis's vigilance: "See those men over there. It's just so—hard, 'cause I know how they feel…I'm Hispanic. I know where my grandparents came from." Such knowledge is painful, because one cannot stay in the same place (Anzaldua, 1999). Similar to Louis's story, the Mexican American teacher candidates at STU have developed a sense for survival and strength that comes from the borderlands experiences. Deeper than empathy, they have understandings of the community, the students, the families, and their struggles. This knowledge shapes their teaching and their teaching shapes knowledge as they constantly mediate between the past and present with the possibility for a different future. Is this not how social justice should transpire in our classrooms?

Aside from the dearth of literature, this study contributes crucial understandings to new scholarship and to the rethinking of the preparation of teachers. Rather than presented as a deficit image of center–margin separation, this research demonstrates how HBCUs can be positioned to offer rich cross-cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical settings. At a small HBCU the challenge of place making is twofold: While the institution struggles to maintain its pride of place in the community, it also struggles to sustain its significance of place in U.S. higher education. Even so, few programs at HBCUs and throughout higher education have tapped into the rich resources of Mexican American teacher candidates to help these students establish their *pride of place*—their stake of claim as teachers within our expansive educational communities. This research calls for social justice to transpire.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Study: **Mexican Americans' Perceptions and Negotiations of the Black College Experience**

Dear Potential Participants:

Identification of Principal Investigator, UT/HTC Affiliation, and Phone Numbers:

My name is Jenefred H. Davies and I am a fourth-year doctoral student whose specialization is Early Childhood Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Texas at Austin. Concurrently, at Huston Tillotson College I am an Associate Professor of Teacher Education and Director of Field Experiences for Teacher Education, undergraduate level. My contact numbers and information are: phone$441-4816 (home), #505-3093 (office), or email Oline70@aol.com or jhdavies@htc.edu.

You are being asked to participate in a research study to be conducted during 2004-2005. As the Principal Investigator (and the only investigator), I will conduct the study in partial fulfillment for requirements in EDC 396T, *Directed Studies in Curriculum and Instruction,* and for my dissertation work. The professor sponsoring my research study is Dr. Lisa Cary at the University of Texas and she can be reached at #471-4611 or CaryLJ@mail.utexas.edu.

This form provides you with information about the study. Please read the information and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, you will be one of potentially seven people in the study. You have been selected as potential participants because of your Hispanic heritage and because you are enrolled in the teacher certification program at Huston-Tillotson College, a Historical Black College.

If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you?

Your participation is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no bearing on your grades, or class standing in any of your courses at Huston-Tillotson College, or your relations with me. Please feel free to talk with me informally at anytime or e-mail me your thoughts about the study. At any time if you question or decide to discontinue your participation, simply notify me in writing, by phone, or by e-mail. I assure you that I am fully committed to honoring this contractual agreement and the integrity of the research study.

Explain the Title and Purpose of the Research Study. Is there a funding source? If you choose to participate, will it cost you anything? Will you receive any compensation for participation in this study?

The title of the research study is *Mexican American Teacher Candidates' Perceptions and Negotiations of the Black college Experience.* No funding was needed nor solicited for this study, and no one receives any financial remuneration for participation. The purpose of the study is to explore why and how you, as a Mexican American teacher candidate, have negotiated experiences at a Historical Black College. Specifically, what experiences have been helpful, harmful, neutral, or not significant in your matriculation as a teacher candidate?

What will be done if you take part in this research study? What are the possible discomforts and risks? What if you are injured because of the study?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to meet with me for two individual interviews (approximately one hour each), one group discussion (not to last more than two hours), and three observations in the field; plus after each, a follow up conversation. The observations and conversations can be scheduled as part of your internship or student teaching activities. As you know HTC placements in the field may range from the public school classroom or private school setting to service learning experiences at Safe Place, Pioneer Farm, or other agencies that assist children. Although there are no foreseeable risks or embarrassment to participants in this study, if you feel discomfort about revealing personal perceptions, you can choose not to respond to any questions that you prefer not to answer. Participation in the study poses no threat to bodily harm, however, understand no special arrangements have been made and no medical treatment will be available in case of injury as a result of participation in this study.

During all sessions I will keep brief notes to later type them and then ask you to read each summary for clarification, changes, or deletions. Each review session will take approximately 20 minutes, and we can do them face-to-face or online, according to your preference. If desired we will schedule additional review sessions until you are satisfied that I have accurately reflected your perceptions. In order to minimize any risk, your name will be substituted by a pseudonym in all written summaries and the final paper. At any time you may review the manuscript and your suggestions will be appreciated.

To help my memory, I will use an audio recorder during the individual interviews and group session. Please understand (a) that my field notes and audio records will be coded so that no participants' personally identifying information is visible; (b) that the notes from the interviews, group discussion, observations and conversation as well as any electronic communication not in public domain, will be kept in a locked cabinet at my home office; (c) that they will be used only for research purposes by me; and (d) that after completion of the study, they will be destroyed. All observations, individual interviews, and the group meeting will be concluded and the final paper submitted for committee review.

How can you withdraw from this research study and who should you call if you have question? How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records by protected?

Throughout this project I will keep you informed if any information becomes available that might affect your decision to remain in the study. At any time you are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. If you wish to stop participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact Jenefred Davies at Huston-Tillotson College (512-505-3093) or Dr. Lisa Cary at the University of Texas (512-471-04611).

Since I anticipate this study will provide worthwhile information, I have made application to present the study's findings at the American Educational Research Association conference in April 2004. Hence, Dr. Cary as well as the UT Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review my research records and will protect the confidentiality of the records to the extent permitted by law. Otherwise, your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. If the results of this research are further published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Clarke A. Burnham, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, (512-232-4383).

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent Date

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of the Consent Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Printed Name of Subject Date

Signature of Subject Date

Signature of Principal Investigator Date

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

First Individual Interview Questions

1. Please begin by telling about your background, particularly, how you grew up and your own schooling experiences.

2. Have you attended other colleges or universities? Why did you choose STU?

3. Why did you decide to become a teacher?

4. What does it mean to be a Mexican American teacher?

5. What does it mean to be a Mexican American student at a primarily Black university?

6. What are the strengths of STU? The drawbacks?

7. What are the strengths of the teacher education program at a HBCU? The drawbacks?

8. While attending this HBCU, have you experienced incidents of discrimination? Exclusion? Marginalization? Conflict? If so, please share the incident(s) and your reactions.

9. Concerning your studies, the curriculum, and learning experiences at STU, what specific books, research projects, or topics of discussion have been most meaningful to you? Why?

10. What can be learned from African American students and teachers?

11. What can be learned from Mexican American students and teachers?

12. Do you have any questions or concerns about this particular research project?

Second Individual Interview Questions

1. What is your learning style? What style of instruction works best for you?

2. Have you experienced a topic or curriculum at STU that caused you to feel angry or embarrassed?

3. Can you think of a fellow student, faculty member, or teacher at STU or in the public schools with whom you seemed to relate especially well? Why do you think this is so?

4. Was there someone, a fellow student, faculty member, or in the schools, a teacher or a child, with whom you faced conflict this year? Why do you think this was so?

5. Are there any curriculum issues that concern you? Specifically, were there any topics or academic assignments that you found offensive or demeaning? If so, what? How did you handle your opinion, your feelings?

6. What are your opinions about children who talk Ebonics in school?

7. What are your opinions about children who speak Spanish in school?

8. How do you think you have changed as a result of your experiences at STU?

9. How have your educational experiences differed from other teacher candidates in this program?

10. Do you feel prepared to teach widely diverse populations of students in the public schools?

11. We've discussed the *Subtractive Schooling* in Level II. Have you seen incidents where children's cultures or language were devalued? If so, what?

12. We've talked about culturally relevant pedagogy. Have you found "teachable moments" to support culturally relevant pedagogy? What were the students and your reactions to the content or activities that seemed culturally relevant?

13. How do you handle discipline? Is there any special advice or information about Hispanic children that teachers should know?

14. Do you see any possible mismatch between what you've learned, what you want to teach and what will be expected of you as a teacher in public schools?

15. Is there anything else about STU or the Teacher Certification Program that you want to comment about?

16. Has your participation in this research project altered your perceptions of yourself or your perceptions of STU in any way?

Small Group Semistructured Interview Questions

Thank you so much for participating in this study. Let's begin by introducing ourselves to each other. Next, I'd like to shape this discussion with three overarching issues: (a) financing a college education, (b) the impact of knowing about culture and language, and (c) ways to improve our teacher education program at STU.

1. Financing a college education and career:

- How do you interpret the terms middle class and working class?
- Have limited finances impacted your college education? How?
- While at STU, where have you looked for support, encouragement and resources to stay in college?
- In reflecting on your multiple experiences at STU, what advice, particularly financial advice would you give to incoming teacher candidates?
- With regards to teaching in the public schools, does a teacher's socioeconomic class matter?

2. Culture and Language:

- What type of preparation is needed to teach English-as-a-second-language speakers?
- Since there is no bilingual certification program offered here at STU and no specific course that addresses the needs of second-language learners, how can we improve our teacher preparation program to better meet the need of future teachers who will be serving this type of students in their classrooms?
- Thinking about your teachers, does one's culture matter in teaching?
- Two of you have discussed with me the problem in classrooms where some Hispanic students resent the time the teacher might spend translating the lesson for Spanish-dominant students. This resentment seems to come more from the Hispanic children than the students of other cultures. Do you see this situation? How can teachers work to improve relations between Spanish-dominant and English-dominant Hispanic students?

3. Improvement of Teacher Preparation Program and possibly the university climate:

- How can STU better meet the needs of non-Black students on this campus?
- Do you feel that some people at STU want you to suppress your biculturalism? (Want to suppress your speaking Spanish?)
- Are there people on this campus who have helped you maintain your biculturalism?
- Would negotiating your identity be easier, the same, or harder at a predominantly White institution?
- As compared to other universities, does this place—its location on the east side of town, in [city], in Texas—make a difference in your education?

APPENDIX C

CRT STORYTELLING: THE HOUSETHAT GIRAFFES BUILT

Critical Race Theory, Critical Pedagogy and Borderlands Consciousness depart from mainstream scholarship and methodologies by employing *storytelling* to analyze the myths and assumptions about race and discrimination, which invariably lower the status of subordinated groups (Elenes, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Tate, 1999; Thornton, 1999; Villenas et al., 1999). Within many cultures, stories are given much authority as teaching tools (Choe, 1999; Hermes, 1999). Stories construct knowledge "from below" (Elenes, 2003) and provide the necessary context for empathizing, understanding, and interpreting. The exchange of stories can help overcome ethnocentrism and the "dysconscious" convictions of viewing the world in one way (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Chicano/a narratives in particular are counter-hegemonic (Elenes, 2003; Villenas et al., 1999).

A modern fable, "The Giraffe and the Elephant," provides a context to help faculty, staff, parents, administrators, alumni, and business representatives embrace and discuss ways to reconceptualize their house/workplace to effectively support increasing numbers of diverse populations in our schools and universities. This fable is applicable to universities that make limited accommodations to help diverse types of students excel, despite purporting to welcome diversity (religious, ability, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, race). The following is an adapted version of the modern fable, "The Houst That Giraffes Built," created by Thomas (1999) and published in *Building a House for Diversity* (pp. 3–5):

> The giraffes were wonderful carpenters but they needed more help to accomplish the work. Since their relatives lived in another town, they looked out their windows. The giraffes saw that the neighbors, the elephants, also had good carpentry skills, and they warmly welcomed them to their workplace.
>
> The elephants arrived with smiles on their faces and in their hearts, because they liked carpentry, needed the work, and wanted to achieve. Very soon the elephants realized they could only get their heads in the door, not their bodies. Even when the doors were made wider, the elephants found climbing the stairs was not safe. The food in the cafeteria was unfamiliar. So they preferred to bring their own lunches and eat outside. They appreciated the "It's Elephants Day" celebration but felt disheartened that few giraffes attended.
>
> As the elephants grew dismayed and disheveled, some stopped. A few kept coming to work, but they told their elephant-friends about the problems. Then many of the friends decided not to apply.
>
> The giraffes said, "The problem is you need to go on a diet." So the elephants lost weight but still, they did not feel comfortable using the tools customized only for giraffes. Then, the giraffes suggested that the elephants take aerobics classes and dancing classes to change their shapes and style. The elephants were not convinced. They finally decided, "A house designed for giraffes will not work for elephants unless there are some major changes" (Thomas, 1999, p. 4).

In this fable, the giraffes represent the "majority" group in charge of decisions and thinking. It is their house, their design, their rules. The Others—the subordinates—are the elephants. Although warmly invited into the giraffes' workplace, the elephants are the outsiders and always will be. Feelings of discomfort, contradictions, and conflict place the elephants in the border zone (McKenna, 2003). The giraffes build the house with giraffes in mind, with minimal modifications rendered to help the elephants be effective workers. When attempting to resolve frustration, the giraffes focus on physical appearance, not realizing the problem has anything to do with their way of thinking. Here the adage, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," cannot help the elephants, because no matter how hard they try, they will never be Romans (or giraffes). Such social expectations and practices are dehumanizing (Apple, 1997; Freire, 1968).

According to the author, Thomas (1999), the giraffes and the elephants represent a diversity mixture, which Thomas defined as "any combination of individuals who are different in some ways and similar in others…It is in this collective mixture that true diversity lives" (p. 5). This critical concept challenges us to abandon our traditional thinking about diversity that any situation, organization, or society has the "main" people and the Others—those who are different in some way. In the traditional view, it is the Others who constitute the diversity. So it is at STU, where "we" believe "we" constitute diversity while making minimal modifications in our attitudes or course offerings to render a more effective learning environment for Others. Just as in the fable, such modifications to the workplace and perfunctory changes in thinking would not have diminished the giraffes' successes but rather become a revelatory site of creativity (McKenna, 2003).

In this story it is critical to recognize that the production of knowledge is both "the conditions of institutions and the effects of institutions" (Giroux, 1992, p. 29). In other words, at academic institutions, the creation of knowledge is the process by which the primary goal is achieved. Modifications in thinking and in workplace tools and facilities more likely would reduce frustrations among all constituents. With reduced tensions, more and possibly better quality work would be accomplished. It is ever more apparent that this type of CRT and borderlands fable is enlightening for university leaders, faculty, and preservice teachers to read, deliberate, and apply to their own educational settings where *effective place making* and *pride of place* are critical to the successes of their students.

APPENDIX D

THE POWER OF PLACE AT STU

Do you believe that space can give life, or take it away, that space has power?
hooks, 1990

In responding to hooks' (1990, p. 103) query, the purpose of this addendum piece is to honor the *power of place* at one HBCU. After all, place informs our views of identity, power, politics, and race (St. Pierre, 2000). Most significant are the stories of the constituents—the preservice teachers—who have walked the halls, mastered the curriculum, and fostered pride in their accomplishments and loyalty for their university. Just as in chapter 4 each teacher candidate's stories illuminated the situated, endangered, and enduring selves (Spindler, 2006; Spindler & Hammond, 2000), so too, the legacy of STU can be depicted as situated, endangered, and enduring.

Haymes (2003) has argued for using a *pedagogy of place* to facilitate Blacks in coming to voice their own resistance within and against urban struggles of domination. Such pedagogical actions could help constituents to better understand how the dismantling of territory disrupts cultural identity formation—or, vice versa, understand how changes in cultural identity at a site (like STU) disrupt constituents' links to that territory (site). By withdrawing or destroying the public's identity links to physical space, "urban Blacks are less able to sustain the networks of family and friends necessary for organizing their experiences into a collective identity…the loss of land also means a loss community" (Haymes, 2003, p. 221). In defense of segregated Black spaces that are often viewed by Whites as a sign of anti-White racism, hooks (1992) claimed that segregated Black spaces are a political sanctuary to attempt to escape White domination. In effect,

since long-valued territory is critical to maintaining a cultural group's identity, the redevelopment of space "threatens the very material basis of Black public life" (hooks, 1992, p. 222) and gentrification implies associations with White capitalist power brokers. Indeed, Haymes' explanations of the Black urban struggle help illuminate why the preservation of the integrity of STU is paramount to numerous African Americans. Especially resistant and fearful of losing too much Blackness (S. Willie, 2003; Winbush, 2004) are the older alumnae who prior to the 1960s had no other choice but to attend a Black-only institution.

To consider the phenomenon of a Black College as a unique educational setting for teacher trainees, one must first take into consideration the function of place within the wider contexts of the city and society. Also for consideration is the function of STU's place as a "lower tier" or Tier 3 institution, which uses minimal selective admission criteria and generally attracts students from middle- and working-class populations. STU's lower hierarchical status thus positions it unequally with respect to power among other institutions of higher education in Central Texas.

Situated east of downtown, STU has prevailed for over 110 years at the same site. The STU buildings reflect the architecture of different decades of use. Long ago the STU campus stood amidst the prosperous Black community. Over time, distinctions of the city's east and west sides have been stratified by race and class. After the 1960s, the community surrounding STU's campus descended into despondency, as many of the middle-class Blacks migrated to higher taxed sections of the city. As in other large cities, STU's neighboring community experienced transition patterns where many Black families and entities were gradually replaced by Hispanic or Asian families and

businesses. Today, two Black communities—one middle class, the other poor—mostly exist in different areas of the metropolis. Still, even though the city's Black families may live in different middle-class or working-class sections, on Sundays most of them convene to pray together at the historically Black churches near the STU campus. As hooks (1990) pointed out, Black institutions serve as sites of resistance and empowerment. The pride-filled churches, signifying *aesthetics of place,* continue to draw robust congregations for spiritual and cultural vitality. More than an ideology of art and beauty, aesthetics is a force for looking and becoming acutely aware (hooks, 1990). Also, as hooks (1990) explained, "loving Blackness" marks a political stance as well as a space of resistance and a space to recover selves. In effect, loving Blackness encourages everyone to examine their own racism (hooks, 1990, 1992, 1995). And "the absence of recognition is a strategy that facilitates making a group the Other" (1992, p. 167).

Today, the ethnically diverse neighborhood community adjacent to STU shows signs of gentrification alongside decayed buildings. To the west and northwest of the campus, within walking distance, several small trendy restaurants, a coffee house, art gallery, new apartments, and a towering condominium stand beside a recently installed public mural that depicts images of this proud historical Black community. These upscale efforts mark attempts to develop "a much sought-after African American Cultural District" (Schwartz, 2005, p. A1). Such gentrification efforts inspire hope but create mistrust as well among some neighbors. They wonder about the community's future and the emphasis on modern development. Some citizens believe that the diminishing solidarity of communities is occurring because our culture of consumption has

commodified and reified popular culture rather than honored social and historical roots (Darder & Torres, 2003; Haymes, 2003; hooks, 1990, 2001).

Still, it is the distinctive Blackness and popular culture that many students enjoy about STU. With lighthearted admiration, during the small group session, Joey, Theodore, and Klarissa reminisced about the distinctive flair and fun of STU basketball games. Klarissa explained, "Going to a basketball game is like going to a club with all the dancing and singing going on." Joey said, "Everybody always asks me. I tell them that it's really different…how the parties are different (laughs)."

While discussing the trendy changes in the adjacent community, teacher candidates expressed optimism about opportunities to walk from campus to the new business establishments. Constance even checked into renting one of the new apartments. Yet, when compared to costs of other rental properties in the downtown area, the higher rent of the new trendy apartments discouraged her. Other teacher candidates were more hesitant to embrace the changes and questioned future relations between the new neighbors and STU constituents. Destiny commented, "I like the fact that there's a college on the East side…and I hope it doesn't get labeled 'trendy.'"

Efforts to sustain and revitalize African American culture in this community sharply contrast with the advancing billboards and establishments operated by Latino and by Asian merchants to the northeast, east, and south sides of the campus. Many of the older buildings have been remodeled for new tenets or different purposes. In this vicinity, it is also not possible to ignore random drug dealers or prostitutes who tap on car windshields to stop traffic. In response to threats of crime and vulgarities, most of the Black churches have erected iron fences to designate drug-and-prostitute-free zones.

These same churches also offer counseling and meals to the homeless. Unfortunately, too many citizens equate architectural and sociocultural appearances of poverty with "worthlessness." The indifference to, or denigration of, the poor is shared by many upper and middle-class citizens who own "class interests perpetuate the notion that the poor are mere parasites and predators" (hooks, 2000, p. 45). Similarly, impoverished people are "condemned as a cause of their own misery" rather than praised for "resiliency amidst the most degrading economic and social conditions" (Gutierrez, 2004, p. 272).

With pride and resiliency, the STU campus remains a safe place. In this study, all of the teacher candidates commented that they felt safe on the STU campus. When asked if the campus' location on the east side of town made a difference in one's education, Joey quickly said, "Oh yes, going here helped me to be a better person. There's a stereotype about [the east side] that people think it's bad…[but] I've never had my truck ripped off!"

To insiders, STU is a safe place. "A site where one can confront the issue of humanization…where people strive to be subjects, not objects" (hooks, 1990, p. 42). To outsiders, it remains a formidable place, because of prevailing stereotypes about the east side—with images of ghetto, police surveillance and repression. There is geopolitics involved in this perspective, "where race is tied to territory in a way that mimics the whites only/colored only designations of the past" (hooks, 1992, p. 15). Ask White citizens in Central Texas about STU, and most will respond that they have never seen the campus and know little or nothing about it. Loyalty to and interest in STU comes from strong Black alumni support and the faith community. These constituents honor the history of this institution as a place where Black people gathered to affirm one another

and by so doing healed many of the wounds inflicted by racist domination (hook, 1990, p. 42). Today, such support is buttressed with their high expectations that the institution continues to celebrate Blackness, and for some alumni that means sustaining Black resistance to change—any change.

Thus, administrators, fund development officers, and recruiters confront the enormous and daunting challenge to market STU as a socially viable, invigorating site of higher education. The university's limited budgets for marketing and recruitment make it all but impossible to overcome lingering public images of a campus that is historical (old), East side (poor), and inner city (dangerous). This tired stereotypical image of a HBCU is a hard sell to youthful students and to discerning parents looking to choose the right college experience (Freeman, 2005; Ginwright, 2004; C. Willie et al., 2006). Furthermore, the "stereotype threat in the air," as illuminated by Steele (2004), has both an immediate effect and a cumulative erosive effect. A stereotype threat can affect one's social self concept, intellectual performance, and intellectual ability.

In big or small ways, all 7 teacher candidates in the study have experienced harassment and discrimination while at STU. For example, Klarissa was a first-team volleyball player, but teammates contested and slurred the "White girls'" potential for get their scholarships. Within consecutive years, Joey and Louis each served as captain of the baseball team. Joey, in his 5th year at STU, served as assistant baseball coach while completing his student teaching semester. Louis brought prestige to STU by being named Pitcher of the Week by an athletic conference. Louis pitched numerous shut-out games, helping the team have their first winning conference season. On numerous occasions, however, these 3 STU athletes along with teammates "resisted" discriminatory sneers

from people at other college campuses. Joey remarked, “They were always saying, ‘You go to school in the ghetto,’ making a big deal about the school being [on the east side].” Yet, when the principal at a local middle school asked Joey to be the speaker at the Eighth- Grade Banquet, Joey gained the respect of the audience: “Well, when I ended my speech and told them that I had graduated from STU [on the east side], I got a standing ovation. …The crowd went wild. …They were saying that they appreciate me for going to STU.”

There is much to be said for what the graduating seniors believe they could do to promote STU, if officially sanctioned by administrators. When discussing the strengths and future of the university, the 3 teacher candidate-athletes in this study suggested STU get “recruiters who know Spanish, [and) know the culture of the Valley [South Texas]. It doesn’t make sense to send two African Americans down to the Valley to recruit. The kids can’t relate to them.” Either “use me or at least have someone that knows the Spanish the kids speak!” Already, Joey has recommended STU to teens in his rural hometown nearby, telling them, “I’ve got somewhere you can go. You’ll have small classes. You won’t be a number; they’ll actually know your name.” After traveling throughout Texas with the baseball team, Joey contended that a small college located in the city “is a good selling point.”

Such personal commendations about college choice are persuasive, especially for first-generation college students. After all, Beatrice enrolled at STU on the recommendation of a friend. Constance applied on the recommendation of her high school counselor. Joey and Klarissa came to STU through the advice of their high school

coaches. Persuaded by her employer, Destiny enrolled. STU was the only institution to which these extraordinary teacher candidates applied.

With the fusion of time, space, and experiences, these teacher candidates have claimed STU as their own—a "homeplace" of pride and resistance (hooks, 1990) and liberation (Haymes, 2003). The homeplace is one site where one can freely confront the issue of humanization, to heal wounds inflicted by racist domination, to be affirmed in minds and hearts despite hardships, and to restore the dignity denied on the outside in the public world (hooks, 1990). As this study revealed, the 7 preservice teachers' educational, social, and cultural identities are now associated with and organized around STU's spaces. Those spaces are physical, psychological, cultural, and social. Such "places are significant because we assign values to them in relation to our cultural projects" (Haymes, 2003, p. 212). "We attach ourselves to places because they have a more lasting identity than we do" (Welty, as cited in St. Pierre, 2000, p.259).

Indeed, STU is an enduring legacy. It is an important site for place making and for producing Black culture, Black aesthetics, and Black identities (Bennett, 2004; Gay, 2004; Hillard, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2003; C. D. Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004; Tobolowsky et al., 2005). Like other HBCUs, STU not only holds special meaning and memories, but also continues to provide the basis for building a community of resistance and liberation (hooks, 1990, 1992). Simultaneously, STU faces challenges to retain its mission and to redefine it to better meet the needs of the multicultural population it enrolls (B. Jones, Dean of Enrollment Management, personal communication, July 12, 2005). Certainly, every student deserves a pride of place at STU. Likewise, border crossers should not have to camouflage or put their identities on trial, but instead should

be afforded spaces that are pedagogically safe and socially nurturing (Elenes, 2003; Giroux, 1992). To be successful, students should not have to diminish their identities.

As part of the "visible but rarely recognized diversity group" at STU, all 7 Mexican American teacher candidates in this study have exhibited *acts of resistance and liberation.* According to hooks (1990), one "purpose of resistance is to seek the healing of yourself in order to be able to see clearly" (p. 42). In so doing, these teacher candidates have contributed to place making of community and to pride of place at STU. Six of the 7 teacher candidates were Honor Students, having maintained at least a 3.5 GPA. All have uniquely dignified their journey at STU.

Despite jeers or curious questions from onlookers about their attendance at a Black university, these 7 Mexican American teacher candidates have expressed their respect for the dignity signified by a Black College. The study's findings reveal evidence that these 7 teacher candidates claim pride of place at STU, but it is not clear that other non-Black students might be able to do so (which was not a focus of this study). Pride in the STU campus abounds; Theodore explained that the strength of the college is "its history." Susan stated, "Having a church on campus is important. We all have some type of religion that ties us together." Yet, when asked for suggestions to better recruit Mexican American students, Susan balked: "Keep the percentage of Others low, because you'll lose the African American experience. …Being here is a gift, an honor."

The institution's social and historical context offers challenges and opportunities for an enriched intellectual climate among students with diverse life experiences and knowledge perspectives. Yet, it is still essential to ask: What is lost when the student—the Other—cannot claim a pride of place in the school?" To assure a more vibrant

experience for all students and to boost the livelihood of this institution, this HBCU must expand beyond Blackness to encompass a more diverse pride of place. In rethinking the Black experience and power of place, we must restore and deconstruct so that new spaces and journeys are possible (hooks, 1992). In imagining a different future, a contradiction exists: "In order to shape an institution's evolution, it may become necessary to destroy at least part…in order to save it" (Haymes, 2003, p. 226). Without betraying its founding principles, STU can embrace its expanded role in educating minority populations, enabling student to choose both academic success and maintenance of their own cultural identities. As STU embraces increased numbers of Mexican Americans/Hispanics, Asians, and students from other diverse heritages, it becomes a win–win situation for the students and the institution. The university can welcome and honor diversity and at the same time help all students to establish their pride of place at STU. Based on ties of friendship, history, and place, STU can move forward: "The dream of the common culture is gone and we have in its *place* a dynamic flowering of multiplicities" (McKenna, 2003, p. 431).

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VITA

Jenefred Hederhorst Davies, born in Houston, Texas, on July 20, 1946, is the daughter of Georgie and Fred Hederhorst. Following her graduation in 1964 from Robert E. Lee High School in Baytown, Texas, she earned the degree of Bachelor of Science from the University of Oklahoma in May of 1968 and the degree of Master of Arts from The University of Texas in May of 1970. She was employed as an elementary teacher for four years in Austin, Texas, and three years in Dallas, Texas. After completing additional coursework at the University of Houston and at the University of North Texas State, in 1999 she entered the doctoral program at The University of Texas. She taught as an instructor for one year at The University of Texas before accepting and continuing to teach for 27 years in the teacher education program at Huston Tillotson University in Austin, Texas. As an educational consultant, she served on state committees for the ExCET and TExES teacher certification examinations as well as conducted workshops and presented papers across the state and at national conferences. In the Austin community, she volunteered as a docent at Jourdan Bachman Pioneer Farm, Mayfield Park, Austin Science Center, McKinney Falls State Park, and the Texas Governor's Mansion. Her publications include science and social studies curriculum written for both the Austin and Dallas Independent School Systems and music curriculum for the Austin Symphony.

Permanent Address: 1714 Bartoncliff Drive, Austin, Texas 78704

This dissertation was typed by the author.